

TEEVADHARA

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION

LITURGY AND LIFE

WORSHIP IN A SECULAR WORLD

Kurien Kunnumpuram

RENEWAL THROUGH ADAPTATION

Paul Puthanangady

YOUTH AND MEANINGFUL WORSHIP

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GROUP LITURGIES

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LITURGICAL SPIRITUALITY

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BULLETIN 1: WORSHIP IN HINDUISM

Mydananda

BULLETIN 2: WORSHIP FORMS FOR MUSLIM INQUIRERS

Henry Otten

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JEEVADHARA

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The Fullness of Life

Liturgy and Life

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Editorial

Promulgated on December 4th, 1963, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy was the first of the documents of the Second Vatican Council to be published and implemented. It gave official approval to the liturgical renewal that was being fostered for a few decades by movements in many countries of the world, especially of northern Europe. In addition to recognizing efforts at liturgical renewal in the past, the Constitution has given it a new impetus, making it more broad-based and initiating an on-going process in it. Still, looking back over the nine years after the promulgation of this historic document, one wonders if the renewal of Christian life which is the object of authentic liturgical renewal has been sufficiently evident in the Church. Has not liturgical renewal been confined rather to the externals, the rubrics of worship? Hence the opportuneness of our present study on *Liturgy and Life*.

Even in a traditionally religious country like India, religious worship has to be set in the context of a process of secularization. In *Worship in a Secular World*, Kurian Kunnumpuram analyses the characteristic features of the secular world and argues that worship will be meaningful in such a world only if it is thoroughly humanistic, avoids compartmentalization of life into the sacred and profane, and uses the language and the symbols of contemporary man; if it fosters the sense of human solidarity and awakens in man the hope of a blessed future. The renewal of the Christian life which the Constitution on the Liturgy envisaged can be achieved only if there is a constant adaptation of the liturgy to local cultures and needs. Paul Puthanangady studies liturgical adaptation in the light of the other documents of Vatican II as well, especially the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, the Constitution on the Church and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. Historically, he argues, liturgy has evolved in the Church as a

result of confrontation with various cultures and assimilation of them: the defect of the post-Tridentine Church has been the forcible suppression of this healthy growth-process. Puthanangady further analyses the theological, psychological and sociological obstacles to adaptation which especially the Indian Church must face and overcome if liturgical renewal is to bear fruit.

It is common experience that our youth are disenchanted with our liturgical services; what gives copious devotion to the elders leaves the young cold and disinterested. Gerwin van Leeuwen tackles this problem in *Meaningful Worship for Youth*. Much of our traditional liturgy, he says, has failed to be meaningful to people, especially to youth, because it has failed to be an "authentic expression and celebration of the living faith of a gathered community in the presence of God." Called as we are to worship the Father "in spirit and in truth", our life is our worship. This "secular liturgy" of our life needs privileged moments of worship which he calls "explicit liturgy"; this explicit liturgy, he adds, will be meaningful if it is actual and situational, sincere and honest, bringing out the revolutionary power of the Gospel and expressed in the language and sounds which youth understand and appreciate. One of the concrete forms of adaptation of the liturgy to make it more meaningful is "group liturgy", as it is called: liturgy performed for specific groups. Sister Dhalla in her article on *Group Liturgies* shows that to be successful the groups have to be homogeneous, small and open. Though spontaneity plays an important role in these celebrations, if they are to be the life-giving experiences they are meant to be they need much preparation, both remote and immediate, and call for imagination and courage.

In our last year's issue on *The Spiritual Life*, the Sacred Scripture was presented as the norm and source of genuine Christian spirituality. In addition to personal prayer and reflection, liturgy mediates the Word of God to man. Scripture and liturgy, then, are twin sources of Christian spirituality. In this issue, George Lobo examines the role played by liturgy in authentic Christian spirituality.

Christianity in India has to be in perpetual dialogue with Hinduism and Islam. Our Bulletin Section provides some

opportunity for this. In *Worship in Hinduism* Swami Mṛdananda points out that *Bhakti-marga*—the way of devotion—is one of the easier ways to God—realization which is the end of human life; the first and necessary step in the acquisition of *bhakti* is the worship of idols, because man needs some concrete expression of the deity before him. The more advanced can do away with it and can have recourse to prayer and meditation, basing himself on scripture and tradition. Henry Otten with his many years of experience with Muslims, suggests particular adaptation of the Christian liturgy to suit Muslim inquirers and converts, because our traditional liturgical forms and expressions have many elements which are unintelligible and distasteful to the Muslim.

At the risk of some overlapping and repetition, this issue tries to make one thing clear; liturgy should not be an escape from the struggles of everyday life but must provide inspiration for authentic human and Christian living. To this end meaningful and responsible adaptation of worship-forms to the genius and needs of a given community is of prime importance.

Lumen
Cochin - 16

Joseph Thayil

Worship in a Secular World

Introductory remarks

1. What is worship? What is a secular world? Anyone who sets out to discuss the problem of worship in a secular world might be expected to have a clear grasp of these terms. The present writer makes no such claims. His main purpose in this article is to share with the reader some of his reflections on the topic. What is said here about worship in a secular world is necessarily tentative and incomplete. It is neither definitive nor exhaustive. As secularization is a continuing process, it is practically impossible at the moment to make any final evaluation of it or to determine all its implications for our understanding of worship.

2. Here we use the term worship in a broad sense to signify a prayer, a church service, or any rite showing reverence for, or devotion to, God. It could mean anything from the fleeting ejaculatory prayer of a busy housewife to a solemn pontifical celebration in St Peter's Basilica. All worship, however, seems to imply acknowledgement of a supreme Personal Being and belief in Him.

3. The term secular is derived from the Latin *saeculum* which originally meant the time of sowing, hence the season, the present age or any age, a century, the temporal succession of the world or just the world. Incidentally *saeculum* has almost the same meaning as the Sanscrit *samsāra*. The term 'secular' can be used with a variety of meanings. Thus we speak of secular persons, laymen and diocesan priests as opposed to the religious. Here we are concerned "with the order of the secular, that is, with the complexus of relationships which go to make up that sphere of man's life which is concerned with the *world*. By the world here I would understand those human institutions

and relationships which have as their proper meaning and finality the total welfare of man in this life"¹

4. Now a word about the plan of this paper. It begins with a description of the main characteristics of the secular world, and goes on to show how the secular mentality has affected modern man's attitude to worship. It then examines the criticism of ritual worship to be found in the Bible itself. By way of conclusion it suggests some means of making our worship meaningful in a secular world.

Some marks of the secular world

1. In his *Religion in Secular Society*, Bryan Wilson mentions three features that mark American society as secular: the prevalence there of instrumental values, of rational procedures and of technical methods. In a secular society, he feels, "the sense of the sacred, the sense of the sanctity of life and deep religiosity are ... absent"²

Besides the 'anonymity' and 'mobility' of modern life, which are really marks of an urban rather than a secular society proper, Harvey Cox has pointed out 'pragmatism', 'profanity', 'pluralism' and 'tolerance' as typical features of the secular world.³ By pragmatism, Cox means, secular man's concern with the question "Will it work?" "Secular man does not occupy himself much with mysteries. He is little interested in anything that seems resistant to the application of the human energy and intelligence."⁴ He evaluates ideas by the results they produce. 'Profanity' refers to secular man's wholly terrestrial horizon, the disappearance of any supramundane reality."⁵ He understands the world not in terms of some other world, but in terms of itself.

1. T. E. Clarke, "What is Christian Secularity" in *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America*, 21 (1969) pp. 201-202, here p. 211.

2. B. Wilson, *Religion in Secular Society*, (1966) p. 112.

3. H. Cox, *The Secular City*, (1965), pp. 2-3; 41-42; 60-61.

4. *Ibid.* p. 60.

5. *Ibid.*

In a secular society, Cox believes, different 'world-views' including 'religions' peacefully Co-exist without the fanaticism so characteristic of the past. Pluralism and tolerance are the children of secularization.... They represent a society's unwillingness to enforce any particular world-view on its citizens.'⁶

2. Secularization is the term used to describe the long complicated process which has made society increasingly secular. It is not easy to give a satisfactory definition of the word. After a careful examination of the issues involved, T. E. Clarke comes to the conclusion that "by secularization today is commonly meant the historical process by which human culture, temporal society and its institutions, the arts and sciences..., have achieved a certain relative autonomy with respect to religion... and have thereby attained a new and distinctive value in and for themselves."⁷ A progressive realization of the autonomy of the temporal sphere as well as the affirmation of the intrinsic worth of earthly realities seem to be implied in the process of secularization.

J. B. Metz has illustrated this process with three examples taken from the West.⁸ In the late Middle Ages there began the progressive liberation of the State from the control of the Church. It made itself increasingly independent of, and distinct from, organized religion. It gradually lost the sacred character it had in the ancient world, and now appears as a secular creation of God'. Then there is the independent development of the secular sciences, which have increasingly freed themselves from the hegemony of theology. This began with the growing independence of philosophy. Already in the works of Thomas Aquinas the philosopher (Aristotle) was accorded a place of honour. In modern times the natural as well as the social sciences have vindicated their autonomy. Thirdly, there is the growing disenchantment in regard to nature. 'Mother Earth' has been deprived of her magic spell. Nature has become an object and field of man's experimentation. It is open to his scientific investigation and active manipulation. Modern man takes an objective, utilitarian view

6. Ibid. p. 3.

7. Op. cit. pp. 212-213.

8. J. B. Metz, *Theology of the World*, (1969) pp. 36-39.

of nature. This is largely responsible for the tremendous technological revolution that is taking place in the world today.

3. Secularization has radically altered man's stance vis-a-vis the world.⁹ He no longer regards the world as something static and well-ordered (cosmos) but as an evolutionary process, a world in the making. For him it is a reality that has to be created and construed by man. Hence it is not the contemplation but the transformation of the world that is regarded as man's proper task.

Secular man is keenly interested in the promotion of human values: love, justice, solidarity, freedom, equality and the dignity of the human person. He is deeply committed to the building up of a new world, a new human society. He is vehemently opposed to all that is unjust and dehumanizing in the world today. He advocates social and political revolution as a means of ushering in a new society which is more just and more human. This revolutionary ardour and fearless social criticism are traits of the secular man.

The secular threat to worship

1. That secularization has deeply affected modern man's attitude to religion and worship is quite obvious. Some advocates of secularization feel that the scientific, conceptual framework in which we are living today has no place for God or the supernatural. This naturally leads them to the conclusion that the very possibility of worship is not open to them.¹⁰

2. Others are not quite so radical in their views. They admit that even for the secular man prayer is a "perfectly conceivable and logically clear activity". But, then, they give a thoroughly new interpretation to prayer. Paul Van Buren, for example, understands by prayer "reflection and consequent action".¹¹

9. H. Schmidt, "Liturgy and Modern Society Analysis of the Current Situation" in *Concilium* 2 (1971) p. 7, pp. 14-29, esp. pp. 17-19.

10. V. Pratt, *Religion and Secularisation*, (1970) pp. 11-12; 67.

11. P. M. Van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel* (1963) pp. 188-190.

He says: "The meaning of intercessory prayer is its use: it begins in reflection upon the situation in the light of the Christian perspective and leads to appropriate action." In former times, when a Christian knew that his neighbour needed rain for his fields he prayed to God for rain. He regarded this as the most effective way of helping him. But today the secular Christian will rather "go to see his neighbour, study the situation with him and see what can be done to get water on the fields by irrigation or other means." This is what intercessory prayer means for him. "Thanksgiving and adoration express his joy and wonder before the fact that the world is and that he is, and that his historical perspective gives him a way of understanding both himself and the world." This is, to be sure, "the secular meaning" of worship.

3. Deeply aware as he is of his social obligations, the secular man often questions the meaningfulness of prayer and worship. Does it make any sense, he asks, to celebrate the liturgy, when the world is being torn apart by hatred, suspicion and violence? Is it not tantamount to an abdication of our responsibility to the victims of poverty and exploitation, of unjust wars and racial discrimination? The need of the hour is the liberation of man, not the celebration of a divine liturgy.

4. Modern man finds liturgical worship irrelevant because of its separation from everyday life. Our liturgy often uses an inherited language which appears to many as "anachronistic and artificial" "Many today therefore find liturgical language and the ideas it contains, and the very symbolism of the liturgy, empty of content and largely meaningless to those who live in an industrial and urban civilization."¹²

5. The secular man is scandalized by the fact that worship has apparently so little influence on the daily life of the worshippers. In their personal life they seem to be as selfish and unscrupulous as the avowed atheist. "It is characteristic of some religious professionals," remarks E. Vilanova, "to behave as if

12. E. Vilanova, "Liturgical Crisis and Criticism of Religion" in *Concilium* 2 (1969) 5, pp. 5-11; here p. 5.

they had never heard the imprecations launched by Amos and Isaiah against useless sacrifices as a remedy for lapses in justice or love."¹³

Criticism of ritual worship in the Bible

1. The prophetic literature of the Old Testament contains a number of passages which are highly critical of ritual sacrifices. It was formerly thought that these passages implied a total rejection of the ritual system. But modern scholarship seems to favour the view that the prophets were primarily denouncing the empty externalism of Israel's ritual worship.¹⁴ "When the offering conceals unrepented sins and unchanged malice the symbol of holiness becomes a mask of unholiness."¹⁵

Thus Samuel tells the disobedient Saul: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to harken than the fat rams" (I S 15/22 c. f. also Jer. 7/21-26). Through the mouth of the prophet Isaiah God condemns the duplicity of the people of Israel "who honour me with lips, while their hearts are far from me" (Is. 29/13, c. f. also Hosea 8/11-14). Psalm 50 is extremely ironical when it declares that Yahweh is not hungry. It is not the flesh of bulls and the blood of goats that He demands from his people, but fidelity to the covenant and a life of righteousness. Hosea speaks in a similar vein: "For I desire steadfast love, not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings" (6/6). At the beginning of the Book of Isaiah God tells His people that he has had enough of the burnt offerings of rams, that He finds no pleasure in the blood of bulls (1/11). Instead He asks them to "cease to do evil and learn to do good", to "seek justice and correct oppression" and to "defend the fatherless and plead for the widow" (Is. 1/16-17).

This concern for the poor and the oppressed is a term very dear to the prophets. Jeremias asks the Israelites to execute

13. Ibid. p. 8.

14. c. f. B. Vawter, "Recent Literature on the Prophets", in *Concilium* 10, (1965) I, pp. 61-67.

15. J. L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, (1966) p. 757.

justice and not to oppress the alien, the orphan, or the widow, if they wish to please the Lord and reap the benefits of the covenant (7/57); c. f. also 22, 2-3). Amos insists that God will not accept their sacrifices unless they practise justice (5/21-24). "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil?", Mica asks them (6/7): "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?" (6/8).

2. In the Gospels Jesus Christ takes up the prophetic criticism of sacrifices.¹⁶ He quotes with approval the words of Hosea: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (Hosea 6 6; Mt. 9, 13; 12/7). He also cites the words of Isaiah about the hypocrisy of the people who worship God with their lips only (Is. 29/13; Mk. 7/6-7). Like the prophets of old, Jesus declares that mere external worship is useless unless one leads a life of obedience to God: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Mk. 7/21). The correct performance of rituals and the scrupulous attention to ritual purity, he points out, can be no substitute for a life of genuine submission to God (cfr. Mt. 53/25). In fact, Jesus goes to the extent of denying that the correctness of rituals has anything to do with the holiness or sinfulness of man (cfr. Mk. 7/15-23). What really defiles a man is the evil desires of his heart.

In this connection it may be useful to examine Christ's attitude to the Sabbath, the chief day of worship for the Jews. It seems to be beyond doubt that Jesus was highly critical of the juridical approach to the Sabbath observance, so common among his contemporaries. He is reported to have worked three miracles on the Sabbath day - the cure of a man with a withered arm (Mk. 3/1-6), the healing of a woman who was a cripple for eighteen years (Lk. 13/10-17) and the cure of a man suffering from dropsy (Lk. 14/1-6). It is significant that not one of these persons was in real danger of death. So Jesus need not have effected these cures on the Sabbath day; He could, in fact have put them off to the following day; Why then, did he choose to 'violate' the law of Sabbath? Challenged by his enemies, he asked:

16. c. f. H. Braun, *Jesus* (1969), esp. pp. 72-85.

"Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman - a daughter of Abraham - whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" (Lk. 13/15-16). Thus Jesus makes it abundantly clear that the law of the Sabbath should never prevent us from rendering service to a man in need. He goes a step further and declares that "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." (Mk. 2/27). We can only sense the tremendous import of these words of Jesus. According to the belief of the Jews of those days God had imposed on His chosen People the observance of the Sabbath in order that they might in some way reproduce here on earth the heavenly Sabbath which God keeps along with all the angels. Now Jesus asserts that this Sabbath, which is kept both in heaven and on earth, is not to be regarded as a service of God, but exists for the sake of man. The welfare of man, his full development as man, is the purpose of all law and cult.

Meaningful worship in a secular world

In the light of what has been said so far, some suggestions are now offered that may help make our worship more meaningful. Obviously it is impossible to speak here of everything that can and should be done in order to adapt our forms of worship to the needs of secular man.¹⁷

1. To be meaningful in a secular world our worship must be eminently humanistic. It should give expression to our appreciation of man and of values in human life. Most likely the thought of a humanistic liturgy will make some people feel uncomfortable. But Christianity - and so Christian liturgy - must be humanistic if it takes Jesus Christ seriously. The Incarnation of

17. Unfortunately we cannot here discuss the basic question: Is it meaningful for the secular man to believe in God and worship Him? Some thinkers today speak of a "secular experience" of God. c. f. J. B. Metz, *Theology of the World*, esp. pp. 70-77; H. Bouillard, "Human Experience as starting-point for fundamental Theology", in *Concilium* 6 (1965) 1, pp. 42-48.

the Son of God is the most powerful affirmation of man and the values of human life. There was no better way for God to show His appreciation of man than by becoming man Himself.¹⁸

Christian humanism is not atheistic. It is deeply conscious of the God-dimension in man. It realizes that man can find the full meaning of his existence only in God. Hence worship of God, properly understood, occupies the central place in this humanism. To worship God does not of course mean just to sing His praises. The glory of God, as Irenaeus so happily expressed it, is man fully alive.

Our liturgy is truly humanistic only if it mirrors the joys and hopes, the sorrows and sufferings, the fears and anxieties of people today. A divine liturgy that is celebrated in splendid isolation from the concrete life-situation of modern man is rightly regarded as totally irrelevant.

2. To be relevant today liturgy must be part and parcel of man's everyday life. Often there is a tendency among Christians to regard the liturgy as something apart, as a world in itself. This seems to be the result of man's age-old temptation to divide reality into two areas - the sacred and the profane. But we Christians cannot accept this division. Our faith in the creation of the world by God and in its redemption by Jesus Christ forbids us to regard anything created as profane (c. f. Acts. 10 15 and 28). As Herman Schmidt puts it, "The world's oneness resides in the fact of creation: man with his world created by God *ad extra* and by Christ *ad intra*".¹⁹

If this is true liturgy should not be a world apart with its own language and gestures, signs and symbols. It should rather make use of words and actions, signs and images, borrowed from everyday life. After all, the sacramental signs of the Church were all taken from the ordinary life of man. What could be more commonplace than taking a bath (baptism!) or eating a family

18. For a brief account of Christian Humanism, c. f. J. Splett, "Humanism" in *Sacramendum Mundi*, III, pp. 74-78.

19. Op. cit. p. 27.

meal (Eucharist!)? This does not of course prevent us from making our liturgy artistically beautiful or from introducing dramatic action into it. But it does demand that we do not employ an outdated language in our sermons, prayers or hymns, or unintelligible signs and symbols in liturgical rites.

3. Worship will be meaningful only if it has a real influence on the life of the worshippers. It has always been a great scandal, and is especially so today, that those who spend long hours in prayer can often be utterly unchristian in their everyday life. Hence we must sincerely strive to make our worship an expression of, and an inspiration to, a life of total commitment to God and of genuine concern for our brothers. As Gail Schmidt has said, "The proof, then, of any contemporary celebration is the life style of the regular worshippers. A liturgy works if it influences its participants to affirm their nebulous but real faith in God and to live responsibly, faithfully, through each day."²⁰

4. Community liturgy, properly celebrated, can be a very powerful means of fostering human solidarity. It is true that secular man is quite aware of the fact that we humans belong together, that we are responsible for each other. Nevertheless, there is now manifestly a reluctance on his part to affirm our common identity. This has been in a sense always true since "shared identity quickly implies a common responsibility. But especially today, when mass society forces man to defend his own individuality, man works against bonds of interaction and attempts to negate responsibility to his brother."²¹ Here liturgy can be immensely helpful, as it constantly reminds us of our common identity as worshippers and of our individual as well as collective responsibility to each other.

5. Worship is, and will always be, relevant if it succeeds in awakening in man a lively hope of a blessed future. Secular man is nothing if not forward-looking and forward-moving. If

20. G. Schmidt, "Some Notes on Creating Liturgies", in *Liturgy* 16 (1971) 4, p. 16

21. *Ibid*, p. 15.

our liturgy can constantly keep before modern man the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, where God will dwell with his people, where He will wipe every tear from their eyes, where there shall be an end to death and to mourning and crying and pain (Apoc. 21/1-4), we can indeed rest assured that such a liturgy will correspond to the deepest aspirations of secular man. And he will definitely want to participate in it. For it gives him the guarantee that his sincere efforts to build the earthly city, where human beings will live in brotherhood, freedom, justice and peace, are not doomed to failure.

Papal Athenacum
Poona-14

Kurian Kunnumpuram.

Renewal Through Adaptation

Our liturgical reform ought to be an answer to the need for renewal. Being the renewal of the saving work of Christ for the whole world, it ought to take the problem of man in a wider context, including in it all the dimensions of human existence, because the redemptive Incarnation of Christ was not a mere moral remedy for the sin-affected world; it touched man in his totality, causing a radical transformation of all the values and directive orientations in the life of man. Unless we make our liturgy celebrate the transformation of the whole man in Christ it will not serve its purpose. Vatican Council II speaks of renewal in total context and considers liturgy as an important contributor towards the realization of this objective (SC. 1).

Perhaps we have been lost in the forest of the new norms that have been introduced into our worship. As a consequence, we have not paid sufficient attention to the fundamental aim of all these innovations. We have not asked ourselves: "Has our liturgy contributed to the renewal of the Church as a sign lifted up among the nations (SC. 2), offering solutions to the religious and other fundamental aspirations of man through the centuries?" Such a question can and ought to be answered in various ways. However, there is an answer which is at the root of all others and which must be tackled first if we want to get on the right track in our endeavours. This is the problem of adaptation. The guiding principles of modern liturgical problems, such as the active participation of the faithful, relevance in the choice of liturgical signs, the community aspect of worship, etc., all seem to have their ultimate foundation in the question of adaptation and, therefore the period in the liturgical history of the Church, which was inaugurated with the promulgation of the Liturgical Constitution may be called 'a period of renewal through adaptation': It is hoped that it is not too presumptuous to do so.

I. Liturgical adaptation in the light of the conciliar documents

What is wrong with our liturgy? This question was raised by many eminent men when a heated discussion on Indianization was carried on through the columns of our Catholic newspapers. Although it might seem to be a rhetorical question it seems to be one that must be answered before the need of adaptation can be discussed.

Worship was considered by our manuals of theology as an exercise of the virtue of religion. It was the fulfilment of our obligation to pay homage to the creator. Hence it was an action, oriented towards God. The signs served as means and expressions of this orientation. Instead, in the words of the liturgical Constitution, worship is a means whereby the faithful express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church (SC. 2). And the Constitution on the Church says that the Church is the sacrament of universal salvation (L. G. n. 1). Hence Christian worship has also a horizontal dimension which must be expressed through the signs of her liturgy. This would naturally call for adaptation. In the past, our liturgy, owing to its excessive centralization (the Roman liturgy at any rate) and its rubrical rigidity, could not realize this fundamental exigency. But the spirit and purpose of post-Vatican liturgical reform demand a radical standpoint in this field. This is evident in the various documents of Vatican II.

a) The Constitution on Liturgy

Vatican Council II gives certain norms to be followed in the reform of the liturgy and calls them 'general norms' (SC. 21). This means that in the liturgical renewal of the post-Vatican Church these norms must be regarded as guiding principles and hence the intention of the Council will not be fulfilled if the renewal is carried out without respect for them. Among these general norms, we have, from article 37 to 40 'Norms for Adapting the Liturgy to the Culture and Traditions of People'. The CBCI Commission for Liturgy therefore, interprets correctly the mind of the Church when it affirms: 'There is no more discussion as to whether we should adapt or not: adaptation has to be done

and there is no need to prove it'.¹ When the Liturgical Constitution speaks of the promotion of pastoral liturgical action, it clearly acknowledges adaptation as one of the characteristics of pastoral liturgy (SC. 44). In the revision of the liturgical year, the Constitution envisages the possibility of adapting the celebrations in such a way that the central mystery that is celebrated, namely, the Paschal Mystery of Christ, is expressed more meaningfully for the various cultural groups of peoples (SC. 107).

b) The decree on the missionary activity of the Church

The Christian community is missionary not only when it is actively engaged in the external task of evangelization, but also, and especially, when it celebrates the liturgy particularly 'the Eucharist'.² If in the fulfilment of her missionary tasks, the Church is to be one with the people in whose midst she lives and acts³, and if liturgy is one of the strong points of her missionary activity, she ought to make all possible efforts to integrate into her acts of worship all that genuine human culture can offer in the form of signs and symbols. This is more explicitly stated in no. 19 of the same document when it speaks of missionary catechesis: 'The faith must be taught by an adequate catechesis, celebrated in a liturgy which harmonises with the genius of the people.' Finally, the Church sees in the encounter of Christianity with the cultures of different peoples a new manifestation of the vitality of the Word of God: 'The seed which is the Word of God sprouts from the good ground watered by divine dew. From this ground the seed draws nourishing elements which it transforms and assimilates into itself. Finally it bears much fruit. Thus, in imitation of the plan of the Incarnation, the young

1. See *Word and Worship*, December 1968, pg. 158.

2. 'The Christian community becomes a sign of God's presence in the world. For by reason of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, this community is ceaselessly on the way with Christ to the Father. Carefully, nourished on the Word of God, it bears witness to Christ. And finally, it walks in love and glows with an apostolic spirit' (Ad Gentes n. 15).

3. 'This congregation of the faithful, endowed with the riches of its own nation's culture, should be deeply rooted in the people' (Ad Gentes n. 15).

Churches, rooted in Christ and built upon the foundation of the apostles, take to themselves in a wonderful exchange all the riches of the nations, which were given to Christ as an inheritance. From the customs and traditions of their people, from their wisdom and their learning, from their arts and sciences, these Churches borrow all those things which can contribute to the glory of their Creator, the revelation of the Saviour's grace, or the proper arrangement of Christian life' (A. G, n. 22). Nobody will deny that the best expression, the climax of the manifestation of the vitality of the Word of God, is the liturgy, for there the Word really becomes flesh and dwells among us. Therefore, this cultural assimilation must find adequate expression in the liturgy.

c) The Constitution on the Church

The new concept of the Church as the people of God, gives us a different vision of her universality. It consists in making the mystery of Christ present in the midst of the nations and not in any type of proselytizing conquest (n. 13). The highest expression of this presence is the liturgical celebration, for it is there that the Church shows herself to the peoples 'as a sign lifted up among the nations' (SC. 2). Hence, if the Church is to fulfil her role of being a sign of God's saving presence, and if the liturgical celebration is the greatest manifestation of this presence, the question of adapting liturgy to cultural forms is a foregone conclusion⁴.

d) The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World

The Church has no claim to any superior culture. She is the servant of God at the service of all cultures. As such she has, as one of her functions in this world the discovering and unfolding of the marvels that God has bestowed on humanity from the beginning of its existence, and the purifying and ennobling of the human heritage by its being brought into contact with the Word of God of which she is the minister (servant). Her

4. D. S. AMALORPAVADASS, *Efforts made in the Roman Catholic Church towards indigenisation*, N. B. C. L. C., Bangalore, 1971. pg. 16.

place in the world is to be at the service of mankind as Jesus Christ, her Lord and Master was. Just as she makes use of the Word of God to bring salvation to men, she uses the cultural heritage of man to bring men to salvation: 'Living in various circumstances during the course of time, the Church, too, has used in her preaching the discoveries of different cultures to spread and explain the message of Christ to all nations, to probe it and more deeply understand it, and to give it better expression in liturgical celebration and in the life of the diversified community of the faithful' (G. S. 58). In all the other documents that we quoted above, adaptation was seen as a means of expressing the Christian message through cultural forms for the sake of making it relevant to various peoples. In this last document, however, there seems to be a shift in emphasis. Here adaptation is seen not only as the best means of expressing Christian reality, but also as a way of manifesting the authentic values of human culture by liberating it from all its ambiguities and deviations. In this way adaptation can render excellent service in the dialogue between the Church and the world.

This brief survey of the Conciliar documents has shown that the problem of adaptation is as wide as that of the renewal of the Church itself. It affects the mission of the Church in the modern world very radically. The renewed Church of Vatican II wants to be fully integrated into the human community, for it is there and only there that she can fulfil the mission entrusted to her by Jesus Christ. She cannot accomplish this, she realizes, through a superficial, external contact. She has to meet the world on a deeper level. For her the depth of her existence is realized in the celebration of the liturgy; for the world, the depth of its existence is to be found in the deep yearnings of the human mind and heart, expressed through cultural forms. Therefore, any meeting between the Church and the world must be realized on the level of cult and culture if it is to have a lasting influence both in the life of the Church as the minister of salvation and in the life of the world as the seeker of salvation.

II. Liturgical renewal through adaptation

We spoke earlier of adaptation as constituting one of the general norms for the reform of the liturgy. In this section certain

theological dimensions of the liturgical action itself are examined in order to show how they call for adaptation. This will serve the purpose of illustrating that there cannot be a liturgy at all without adaptation.

a) Liturgy as the celebration of our faith

We must make a clear distinction between the acceptance of dogmatic statements and faith. The former is necessary for faith, but does not constitute faith. When we say that liturgy celebrates faith, we do not mean that it is the ritual presentation of a dogma. Faith is an act of personal relationship. When we celebrate the liturgy, we are making present the personal encounter of the man of today with Jesus Christ, in His Mystery of Death and Resurrection. The old Baptismal rite of immersion, accompanied by the triple profession of faith⁵ illustrates this very well. If it is a personal encounter, the whole person must be involved in this event. The individual that joins Christ in His Death and Resurrection ought to be present in the totality of his relationship, be it social, religious or cultural. As a result of this encounter there is going to be a transformation of the whole person. He with all the elements that make up his personality will acquire a new relationship. There will be a sharing in mentality and attitude, convictions and creeds. He will have in this way a personal faith in Christ. For him, as a result of this celebration, faith will not be the acceptance of an abstract idea but rather the acceptance of Christ whom he will find fully at home in his life-situation. This will help him to discover Christ more and more, for the relationship between him and Christ, being a personal one, will lead to a very natural process of discovery. This is growth in faith.

If we consider liturgy in this perspective of personal relationship adaptation is an easier process, for it is not one of artificial change but of natural assimilation of values. It becomes not merely a change of external signs but the natural expression of an inner relationship.

5. DOM BERNARD BOFFI, *La Tradition Apostolique de Saint Hippolyte*, Münster Westfalen (1965) pg. 48.

In the reformed liturgy we find this personal element stressed very much. This principle of active participation aims precisely at this objective. Hence we may conclude that the personal element in the renewed liturgy naturally calls for adaptation.

b) Liturgy as an act of communication

Communication is at the very centre of all interpersonal human relationships. The Church, with Vatican II, has become more a reality of relationship than of organisation. The action of the Spirit of Christ on the Church and on the world is one of communication and not structurization. The Church becomes a social reality and therefore the relationship between her and society is to be governed not by different structures, but through communication⁶. Liturgy being the action *par excellence* of the Church ought to be an act of communication between Christ and His people... Now, in communication we make use of signs. The more personal a sign is the greater is the degree of intensity arrived at in communication. In fact, abstract values and ideals acquire very original concrete form when they are expressed in the act of inter-personal communication. If liturgy is communication, its signs ought also to be original in their expression. They ought to be real signs of personal communication. They should not be imposed from outside. They will, then, have to be part and parcel of the persons who are involved in this communication. The sacramental rites of the Church, precisely because they are signs of communication, will have, therefore, to be taken from the community with which Christ is in communion.

c) Liturgy as a celebration of the community

A Christian act of worship is not merely an act done by the Church. It is an act by which the Church is realized. It celebrates the constitution and the growth of the Church⁷. But this Church is intimately related to the world. 'Nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts' (G. S. 1). Therefore, when the Church celebrates her reality in the liturgy, she also

6. FRANCOIS HOUTART, *Social Aspects of the Liturgy*, Worship 42 (1968) 6, pg. 348 ff.

7. SACROSANCTUM OONCILIUM, art. 5 and 7.

celebrates therein all human aspirations. Since it is a celebration in signs these should be signs capable of expressing them. The insertion of the Church into the human community, ought to be a continual act of discovering and reflecting on the culture and values of the people and of celebrating them in the highest expression of the Church's existence, namely in the liturgy.

This contact with the communities on a cultural level will in its turn enrich the Church and make her become a universal Community in the true sense of the term. Would not the human communities of India, Africa, China and Japan, have something to offer the Church in order to make her more 'Catholic' not only in geographical extension but also in her cultural assimilation? The values of the great world civilizations of the East must find a rightful place in the heart of the Church. They must adorn her so that she may be prepared to meet Christ, who will appear at the end of time as the Lord of the universe. Celebrating the liturgy with adaptations from local cultures, she will gradually transform these values into fit ornaments for her as the Spouse of Jesus Christ.

d) The eschatological dimension of liturgy

Every liturgical celebration is one of a pilgrim community. The Church is on her journey to the Promised Land. This eschatological character was a very prominent feature of the early liturgy. St Paul says that Christians celebrate the Supper of the Lord until the Lord comes (1 Cor. 11, 26). In their worship they are oriented towards the heavenly liturgy where men of every race, language, people and nation (Apoc. 5, 9) will be gathered together in order to serve our God (Apoc. 5, 10). In the course of her journey the Church is gathering together this multitude of people. She integrates them into her life and continues her journey together with them. One of the moments when this integration takes place in all its intensity is certainly the celebration of the liturgy, for then she brings them into contact with the Lamb that was sacrificed, purifies them in His blood and gets them ready to join the heavenly worship. Of course in the eschatological kingdom they are not going to lose their identity. So in the process of integrating them into her pilgrim procession, she has to make sure that they preserve all

that is valuable and authentic in their culture, for without these values they will not appear as the people of different races, languages and nations described in the Apocalypse. Hence, we may say, adaptation is a necessity in this eschatological perspective.

A liturgy that is celebrated with the active participation of the faithful, in which there is a perfect dialogue and communication between Christ and mankind, and as a result of which there is a universal gathering of human communities oriented towards the celebration of the heavenly liturgy, demands by its very nature diversity in forms and rituals. Since this diversity has its roots in concrete human situations, adaptation of cultic forms from the various cultures is not only legitimate but a necessity. This we shall presently see from the history of liturgical worship in the Church.

III. Liturgy and culture in the course of centuries

A glance at the liturgical history of the Church will clearly reveal the great impact of the various cultures on the forms of worship of the Church in the course of centuries. The existence of the various Eastern rites with their originality and special characteristics is eloquent testimony to this pluriformity in liturgy through cultural assimilation. It is good to remember that these liturgies did not evolve through the work of committees. Since liturgy had a natural growth in the early centuries, its expressions were spontaneous and reflected the cultural background of the people who celebrated the rites. With regard to the Roman rite, we can also make the same statement. It has in it elements from Jewish Christianity the Greco-Roman world, and the Germanic culture.⁸

The early Fathers of the Church were very much aware of the values found outside the Church. They integrated them into their theology⁹ and liturgy. Evidence of the liturgical integration is found especially in the transformation of certain pagan feasts

8. THEODOR KLAUSER, *Petite Histoire de la Liturgie Occidentale*, Les éditions du Cerf, Paris 1956.

9. C. KLOSTERMAIER, 'Prepratio evangelica' in the early Fathers, *Indian Ecclesiastical Studies* 8 (1963) 3, pg. 171.

into Christian celebrations, the adoption of the style and terminology of prayer formulas used by the non-Christians etc.¹⁰. After the Middle Ages, when the Church made contact with other cultures in Africa and Asia, she should have contained the same process of adaptation but she did not, for various reasons. This is not to point an accusing finger at the past. We have to understand the historical situations and attitudes of mind of those who conducted the work of evangelization in the modern period. The missionaries of this period came from a Europe that was torn by religious controversies. Catholicism and orthodoxy were identified with Rome to such an extent that not only the gospel, but even the administrative machinery and other external and secondary elements were completely imported from there. This is quite understandable if we consider that for the post-Reformation Church shaken by a rebellion against the papacy, the best expression of orthodoxy was total fidelity to the Roman Church even in minute details. The gospel was preached in the countries of Asia and Africa with this mentality. As a consequence, paganism was viewed with suspicion and everything that was non-Christian was totally rejected. Today we have entered a new epoch. The period of the Counter Reformation has given place to one of dialogue and as a result the attitude towards non-Christian religions has changed. Instead of wasting our time in blaming the past, let us immediately set to work and begin to do what was neglected for centuries. Naturally this is not going to be easy because we have behind us a tradition of nearly four hundred years, well-established and meticulously structured. To break through these structures is certainly a herculean task; but it is necessary to begin, even if we ourselves in our generation do not see our efforts reaching any spectacular stage of accomplishment. It is necessary that we should also be conscious of the real nature of the difficulties that have to be overcome in the realization of this task. This will help us to orient our

10. C. MOHRMANN, *Problèmes stylistiques dans la littérature latin chrétienne*, *Vigiliae Christianae* 9 (1955) 222-246.

C. MOHRMANN, *La Latinité chrétienne et le problèmes des relations entre langue et religion*, in *Etudes sur le Latin des chrétiens* Vol. I (Rome 1961) pg. 123-137.

efforts in the right direction. If we do not discover the deep roots of the opposition met with in this field of adaptation, we may run the risk of doing very superficial work and in course of time may realize, at the cost of great disappointment, that we have not made much headway towards our objective, in spite of the great amount of hard labour we have put in.

IV. The real obstacles to adaptation

We can divide these obstacles into three categories: theological, psychological and sociological.

a) Theological obstacles to adaptation

There is a reluctance to take the humanity of Christ seriously. Incarnation is reality. The Son of God really became man. He expressed the divine truths through the values, beliefs and symbols which had become for him a second nature¹¹. There cannot be any serious attempt at adaptation without a real act of faith, not an act of mere intellectual assent to the truth about the double nature in Christ but a real conviction that Christ assumed all genuine human values at the moment of His Incarnation and that this Christ, who is truly man, continues to exist in our midst today.

The primacy of speculation in sacramental theology is another obstacle to adaptation. Our manuals of the past presented the sacraments more as truths to be believed than as events to be experienced. If they are regarded as truths, their sign value and consequently their relationship with the various human cultures recede to a second place. Formerly the rites were more ceremonies: whether you understood them or not, whether they were relevant or not, did not matter much, as long as those who participated in the sacraments believed in the grace-giving power of the events of salvation, meant for initiating us into the saving experience of Christ's death and resurrection. The insistence on the liturgical aspect of the sacraments and therefore on their sign-value will make us realize the importance of having relevant signs in the celebration of them. Here, the problem of adaptation becomes important.

11. C. J. GODWIN, *Socio-cultural change in the early Church*, Indian Ecclesiastical Studies 9 (1970) 3, pg. 146.

Another reason for our reluctance to change and adapt can be found in the fact that up to now we have lived on the periphery of liturgy, that is to say, the liturgical action was not really our action; it was the action of the Church and this Church was something far removed from the celebrating community: it was miles away in Rome or in the Bishop or at most in the celebrating priest. What the community had to do was to practice interiority and silence. Most of the activity of the participant was in his soul. The signs of liturgy could be anything, provided it had the sanction of the above-mentioned Church. In other words, our people had not entered into the dynamics of liturgy. Today, with the changed concept of the Church as the people of God, with the re-evaluation of the baptismal priesthood of Christians, we are entering a new understanding of liturgy as the action of the Church. If it is to be the action of a particular community it is absolutely necessary that the signs should be relevant to that community. The question of adaptation naturally becomes one of actuality in this changed perspective.

With regard to the Eucharist there is another reason for the apathy towards adaptation. Practically all attention was concentrated on the real presence. The sacramental and sacrificial aspect was important from a theological point of view of popular Eucharistic piety. Today, Eucharistic theology, without in any way diminishing the importance of the doctrine on the real presence, puts in clearer evidence the sacrificial and sacramental aspect of the Mass. Being a sacrifice, the Mass is an action in which all are vitally involved. Since this is accomplished through signs it is absolutely necessary that these should be intelligible and meaningful to the participants in the sacrifice. This question, if put correctly naturally gives rise to the need for adaptation.

A change in our theological outlook is necessary if we want to tackle the problem of adaptation seriously. As long as we content ourselves with mere rubrical changes, even if these rubrics are taken from the Indian context, we are not going to achieve much in the way of the liturgical renewal intended by the Council. A deep theology will pave the way for a serious renewal and this cannot but be along the line of adaptation and assimilation of genuine human values into the liturgy.

b) Psychological obstacles to adaptation

As soon as the word 'adaptation' is mentioned the minds of many people begin to work in the direction of a situation in which they have to accept what they have once and for all rejected. It is necessary to make them realize what they really did when they became Christians. For very many to become a Christian meant to renounce a particular religion and embrace another in its place. In this process it was not sufficiently realized that what really took place was not a rejection but a transformation. Authentic human value can never be rejected; they must be purified, but not destroyed. In fact even after conversion people preserve many of their mental attitudes and act according to them in many spheres of human and religious life. It is necessary to make them aware of all those values which they have retained even after becoming Christians. This will make them realize calmly and serenely the real meaning of adaptation.

Another factor that must be taken into consideration is the very firm traditional background. Many do not, and some cannot, without violence, penetrate beyond the thick layers of a tradition which has become part and parcel of their existence. Here, what is needed is gentleness and tact, charity and the spirit of understanding coupled with a gradual process of re-education.

c) Sociological obstacles to adaptation

Very many think of liturgy as a collection of norms prepared by a committee and imposed upon the Church by ecclesiastical authority. Our liturgy still bears the stamp of a laboratory product. The celebration of the liturgy mainly consists in the obedient fulfilment of all the prescribed rites. This mentality has to be changed if any genuine liturgical renewal is to take place. True liturgy cannot come out of committees. This is not the way that liturgy began in the early Church. If there had been that attitude in the beginning, of liturgy through committees, we would have had a Hebrew liturgy. There would not have been even a Roman liturgy¹². A genuine Christian liturgy comes out of a genuine Christian community. The norms and regulations

12. AIDAN KAVANAGH, *Liturgical needs for today and tomorrow*, Worship 43 (1966) 8 pg. 488.

that emanate from the central authority are useful and sometimes necessary as guidelines for evolving a relevant local liturgy. But it would be a wrong thing to give to all the liturgical signs prescribed by Rome a uniform meaning. They are not to be considered in the same way as the symbols in mathematics or physics. They indicate certain attitudes which must be translated into other signs according to the changing circumstances. In fact we find that the Roman liturgical books with the reformed rites for the sacraments are published with a note for the Bishops' Conference asking them to make their own rituals, introducing the necessary adaptation. Hence a mere implementation of the rites as they are found in them will not satisfy the exigencies of an authentic liturgical renewal. 'Never has a liturgy been composed in a liturgical laboratory, it must grow in a living community, in deep faith and earnest prayer. Study and experiment must go together'¹³.

Conclusion

The liturgical renewal has been defined as a providential movement within the Church for the total renewal of the Church. The spirit of the risen Christ is active at the centre of this movement. It is He that should inspire and direct us in our endeavours towards the realization of our objective. We need to be open to the Spirit who works both within and without the Church. He will certainly give us courage even if the work before us seems difficult. But there is a very important attitude which we must cultivate in order to ensure that we are really open to the Spirit: this is the genuine Christian attitude of service to the world. We are called to collaborate with Christ whose spirit acts within us. As Christ was constituted Messiah, the servant of God, by the power of the Spirit, we are constituted co-workers with Christ and servants of the world. If we enter into the realization of our task in the spirit of service, we can be sure that we shall reach our goal in spite of everything that stands in our way.

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13. J. NEUNER, in Examiner 30-11-1969.

Youth and Meaningful Worship

“Why search among the dead for one who livess?” the two men in dazzling garments asked the women who came to Jesus’ tomb on the first Easter Sunday morning (Lk. 24, 5). Do not our young people often feel like raising the same question when their elders ask them to come to the traditional Church services? Do we really believe that Christ is alive in services of worship that are alien to the life of the people in the midst of whom we live, to the students with whom we share our life, to the workers with whom we stand at the conveyor-belt? Must we continue to believe that the Christ of the poor is present in prayer meetings, attended by a number of people anxious to maintain the oppressive *status quo* that guarantees them a comfortable life, and that he is absent from among the many people oppressed and exploited by those who stand in the front-rows praising the Lord, “who makes his sun rise on good and bad alike, and sends the rain on the honest and the dishonest”? (Mt. 5, 45). When we think of worship which is to be meaningful to our young men and women, we must start from the premise that they cannot believe in a God who is unable to read the signs of the times; that they can only worship a God who is wholly involved in the struggles of their nation and who is keen to give meaning and hope to their personal lives. Only when our praises of the Lord are related to our life and mission in the world, will our worship be meaningful to youth. Paul Varghese writes:

If the Church fails at this juncture to have vision enough to devise new songs about the world of tomorrow, the end of the world may come too soon for the good of some of us who are responsible to the Lord. To educate the conscience

of mankind, to kindle hope in humanity and to move the nations to decisive political and economic action. these are the songs we have to sing today¹.

Even a cursory reading of the 'Faith and Order' Report of last year on 'Worship Today'² makes it clear that worship is a difficult subject, on which opinion is very much divided. This diversity of views cuts across most denominational barriers. Almost in every Church heated discussions on worship are going on, and similar trends are found in all the Churches. All the participants of the last 'Faith and Order' Consultation on 'Worship Today' agreed that radical reform is needed, reform that goes far deeper than making the traditional elements of worship more accessible to modern man.

For many in the Roman-Catholic and Orthodox traditions the liturgical changes of the last decade came as a great surprise. This clearly shows that we had forgotten what 'worship' or 'liturgy'³ really is: *the authentic expression and celebration of the living faith of a gathered community in the presence of God*. This definition needs further clarification.

Living Faith

Faith is not a box of truths passed on from generation to generation but a surrender to God in Christ which determines and inspires our involvement in the fast-changing, secularizing world in which we live with millions of others. Faith without action, faith 'without works', is dead (Cf. e. g. Jam. 2, 17), just as love, which does not show itself in action, is a matter of words only or empty talk (Cf. 1 Jn. 3, 15-24). Faith is a surrender and commitment to the God who "loved the world so much that he gave

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1. Paul Varghese. How shall we sing the song of the Lord, when the poor perish?, in: *Risk*, IV (1968), p. 58.
 2. *Faith and Order, Louvain 1971*, Study Reports and Documents, World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1971, p. 102-115.
 3. In this article these two terms are used as equivalents to indicate 'common prayer'. The author is well aware that 'common prayer' presupposes the validity of 'personal prayer' but he limits himself in this article to liturgy and worship.

his only Son.... that through him the world might be saved" (Jn. 3, 16-17). Faith in the God who is truly concerned about the world and all who live in this world means that we share that primary concern of the concerned God. If we stand by Vatican II, it means that "the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted"⁴ are truly our joys and hopes, our griefs and anxieties. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy confirms this when it says that liturgy is the fountain from which flows all the power of the Church to act and is also the summit of all her activity.⁵ What the activity of the Church should be in India, where the very political structures that are intended to secure the 'common good' quite often function as instruments of factionalism, harassment, the perpetuation of disabilities of different kinds and the subjection of underprivileged groups of people to sub-human conditions of living, where the gap between the richest and the poorest classes is still widening, where the number of illiterates is steadily on the increase, where the masses live without even the elementary necessities of food, clothing and shelter, where, although some of the old feudal structures are cracking, new forms of exploitation are coming into existence – is by no means uncertain⁶. In her response to this challenging situation the Church, missionary by her very nature, and called to *manifest and fulfil God's will in the world and world history*,⁷ in other words, to be "the universal sacrament of salvation"⁸,

has to create her own image by being the voice crying in the desert against exploitation and oppression. The Church has to be always the community of the proud children of God, who will never reconcile themselves to their actual condition of misery, ignorance and poverty. Only in this way can the

4. *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 1.

5. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 10.

6. Cf. Consultation on '*Theology of Politics and Law in the context of India's Social Revolution*', Bangalore, 25th to 30th of August, 1972, organized by the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, of which the proceedings have still to be published.

7. *Ad Gentes*, no. 9.

8. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 48; *Ad Gentes*, no. 1

Christian message get into the mainstream of the Indian religious tradition, which has always been a *muktimārga* a way of liberation⁹.

People who dodge this challenge do not have a living faith. Therefore the World Council of Churches rightly observed at the Uppsala General Assembly:

In its worship as surely as in its witness in the world, the Church is called to participate fully in Christ's reconciling work among men. In worship we enter God's battle against the demonic forces of this world which alienate man from his creator and his fellowmen, which imprison him in narrow nationalism or arrogant sectarianism, which attack his life through racism or class division, war or oppression, famine or disease, poverty or wealth, and which drive him to cynicism, guilt and despair. When we worship, God shows us that in this battle the final victory belongs to Jesus Christ¹⁰.

Our youth would have little difficulty with worship services that express and celebrate this commitment of the followers of Christ.

Authentic expression and celebration.... of a gathered community

Since the concrete implications of the living faith vary considerably according to the historical and existential situation in which we live, liturgy or worship cannot be something that is prescribed or imposed from above. It must be the event which a group of believers create, a 'happening' to which they contribute and which they undergo at the same time, an experience which they make and live as a group or community of believers. The liturgy, which truly expresses and celebrates the living faith of a community will be much more particular and concrete than the liturgy we are accustomed to: Such a liturgy will be, at the same time, an instrument through which the assembled community discovers its rich and precious particularity. It goes without saying that although Christ becomes most visibly and palpably incarnate

9. John B. Chethimattam, *Towards a Theology of Liberation, Jeevadhara 2* (1972), p. 34.

10. *The Uppsala Report 1968*, Report on Worship, no. 7, p. 79.

in the local congregation¹¹: this congregation is not a truly Christian community if it severs its living connexion with the community of the universal Church and the community of mankind. The gathered community is a Christian community only when it lives in pro-existence¹². God calls the congregation together, as he called his people in the Old Testament, through its *function* of a mission to the world: the fulfilment of his plan of liberation of all men and women. In the saying '*lex orandi est lex credendi*' (we pray what we believe) the Church Fathers expressed the view that the worship of a group of believers necessarily reveals their faith. When a community worships in a way that is irrelevant to the historical and existential situation

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11. This does not at least primarily, refer to people who live in a particular geographical area, but to the people who actually gather to celebrate their living faith, e. g. a students' or workers' congregation, a temporary community formed on the occasion of a consultation or seminar, or even at the beginning or end of a protest march. Cf. Fr. Houtart, *The Eleventh Hour*, the explosion of a Church, London, 1968, p. 89, who distinguishes between a primary and secondary community: and J. E. Lesslie Newbigin, *A South India Diary*, Rev. Ed. London, 1950, p. 73: "The local congregation meeting regularly face to face, gathering round the same table to break the same bread and drink the same cup is the basic unit of the Church's life in a way nothing else can ever be. If love does not exist here, it does not exist at all". In "*Honest Religion for Secular Man*" the same author observes (p. 113f.): "Groups of Christians who are seeking to discover and manifest what the will of God is for the life of man in these several forms of human community must be acknowledged as true congregation. They should be able in the context of their discipleship as men in industry in politics, in administration or whatever it is, to experience and express the fulness of what life in Christ really means. It should be possible for them to have the full ministry of word, sacrament and fellowship as the centre of their common life while they seek to discover what God wills for their factory, their profession, their university". See further: Gerwin van Leeuwen *o. f. m.*, *The Parish in the Pilgrim Church*, *Word and Worship*, 5 (1972), p. 181-188.

in which it lives, it reveals that its very Christian existence is irrelevant. For those who believe that Christ is the 'Alpha and the Omega', "the key, the focal point and the goal of all human history"¹², worship of this kind surely must be unauthentic; and all the participants in the above-mentioned Consultation on 'Worship Today' "were one in their concern that, both today and in the future, worship should be an authentic act"¹⁵.

The words "to express and celebrate" are constantly used in order to bridge the unnecessary gap between world-changers and life-celebrators¹⁴. With Christ's incarnation the social revolution began, the true liberation started. Time and again there is the experience that grace is not something invisible and unsubstantial but God's love 'enfleshed' among men. Wherever this has begun, whenever this is experienced, there is reason for thanksgiving, for celebration, for praise, for adoration. Without this dimension life threatens to become inhuman in the hands of the radical and militant world-changers, for their zeal to destroy the existing structures easily overshadows and even annihilates their vision of the better tomorrow, which cannot come into existence without the affirmation of what is wholesome and human today. That is why Erich Fromm observes: "Those whose hope is weak settle down for comfort or for violence; those whose hope is strong see and cherish all signs of new life and are ready every moment to help the birth of that which is ready to be born"¹⁵. Harvey Cox, therefore, calls laughter "hope's last weapon", and concludes his "chapter "Christ the Harlequin" as follows: "It may be the special responsibility of men of faith to nourish this gift, to celebrate this sense of cosmic hope, and to demonstrate it. It could conceivably disappear, and where laughter and hope have disappeared man has ceased to be man"¹⁶. Thus he

12. *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 10.

13. *Eaith and Order*, Louvain 1971, p. 103.

14. Harvey Cox. *The Feast of Fools*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, U. S. A., 1970³, p. viii.

15. Erich Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope*, Bantam, New York, 1968, p. 9.

16. Harvey Cox, *op. ct.* p. 157.

confirms his earlier affirmation: "Celebration without politics becomes effete and empty. Politics without celebration becomes mean and small"¹⁷.

In the presence of God

We express and celebrate many things. In the liturgy we seek the presence of God in order to express and celebrate our living faith. With gratitude and joy we review what has been achieved as regards the fulfilment of his plan, with confidence and trust we ask for forgiveness, because we have often failed to work for his plan and have pursued our own instead, and with an open mind and an open heart we seek his Word and Wisdom to see what has to be done now to bring his Kingdom nearer.

Formerly it was far easier to experience God's presence than today. Primitive man could easily meet his God in the fields he had not mastered and the phenomena he had not yet understood. The failure of the harvest revealed God's anger; the sudden cure of a sick person, his benevolence. Today the failure of a harvest is due to man's agricultural ignorance or selfishness; a man's cure is ascribed to the physician's skill. In the life of the Christian-come-of-age there is a twofold relationship: his relationship with the God whom he cannot see, and his relationship with his neighbours, his fellowmen, with whom he lives, works, eats, plays, suffers, rejoices and prays. Although these relationships are different, one from the other, it is a fallacy to think that the Christian should live in two different worlds, of which the divine is more important, while the human is the more appealing because it is the reality in which we stand, the reality which we can see, hear, touch and feel.

In our age which, as a whole, silently undergoes the 'death of God', many tend to live their relationship with God only when they pray or attend liturgical services, which seem so totally unrelated to the concrete life they are leading. Decisive options and commitments in the social, political, economical and cultural fields are not envisaged there, and certainly not creatively and prophetically. They are forced to listen to a God who, though interested in what is going on 'down here' is not himself involved

17. *Idem*, p. 120.

in the triumphs, struggles and ventures of modern man. Paul Tillich sensed this phenomenon well when he wrote 'The existence of religion as a special realm is the most conspicuous sign of man's fallen state.'

Liturgy and life, not two watertight compartments

There must be something wrong with the 'liturgical', 'religious' world which men enter when they gather to express and celebrate their relationship with the true and living God. In the eyes of biblical man the world of God and the world of man are one and the same. "The Father who dwells in me does his works", says Christ in his farewell speech (Jn. 14, 19). God himself is working in and through the human relationships of listening, understanding, healing, consoling, sharing and so on. God and man are involved in one and the same history; both look towards the same 'promises' which are not uncertain or vague.. certainty of their fulfilment is based upon God's involvement in the past which is continued in the present and directed towards the future.

For modern man the world of God and the world of man have become separated, and this separation is causing the 'death of God' and also the death of man. The man who does not relate his whole life to God is killing himself, for his life is based upon non-truth. He fails to see that his life is a life in response-ability, that it is a response to the Father who is giving him life. Our life is not something which we have created or earned ourselves, but a 'given' relationship of love which grows through positive responses to the Father of all love. Hence we will never reach the fullness of our 'being-man', unless our relationships have become fully spontaneous love-relationships, and this happens when we share the fullness of life of the Father, Son and Spirit, of the one God who is love. Christ pre-eminently shows this 'being-man'. Hence he is called: "the way, the truth and the life" (Jn. 14, 6).

A liturgy is not really meaningful and relevant which does not show and celebrate the life we are leading in response to the Father in the light of his plan, not ours, which does not show us how to satisfy our inborn hunger for the truth, the true riches, values and aspirations of man, which does not show us the

way towards the fulfilment of our hopes and expectations in the light of God's promises regarding the 'Eternal City, where God will be with his people and wipe away every tear from their eyes, so that there will be no death, nor mourning or crying or pain any more' (Rev. 21, 3-4). Worship must show and celebrate the way towards the future of full brotherhood, where God exercises his liberating Fatherhood in all its richness and fullness. In order to be meaningful and relevant today our worship will have to be attuned to the real life of the people in our secularizing world, a world come-of-age, where God does not interfere in the responsibility of man nor tampers with his freedom but where he leaves man the full responsibility to shape his future in response to the God in whom he attains this future, so that it is both our future and his¹⁸.

Secular worship

Particularly in the light of this future it is obvious that the present world order is not God's. His Kingdom has still to come in many respects. Worship and liturgy should help and inspire us to seek his Kingdom, not ours; to fulfil *his* plan, not ours. Our worship services should deepen our unity with Christ, whose life was one great and total commitment to the realization of the Father's plan. This commitment reached its climax on the Cross, his supreme act of secular worship, without which the last Supper loses its meaning. John relates how Jesus lived for that 'hour' (Cf. Jn. 2, 4; 7, 30; 8, 20; 12, 23-27; 13, 1; 17, 1). That hour was not an hour of prayer: "Calvary was not a Church liturgy, but an hour of human life, which Jesus experienced as worship"¹⁹. Christ died as the Victim of secular conflicts and vested interests. This hour of secular worship lies embedded in a whole life of 'spiritual worship', for 'spiritual worship' is to live our life as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God (Cf. Rom. 12, 1-2), i.e. a life in the world fully committed to God's will for our world, a life which shoulders and does not in any way escape the response-ability, given by God to man to build up this earth towards His Kingdom. When

18. Gerwin van Leeuwen o. f. m., 'Men of Vision,' in: *Together* 38 (may-june 1972), p. 2-5.

19. E. Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, London, 1969, p. 99.

Christ died as the victim of worldly, secular manipulations, he inaugurated a new concept of worship; "Human life itself experienced as liturgy or as worship of God"²⁰. The New Testament brings this out very clearly. In Phil. 2, 17 concern for one's neighbour is a sacrifice pleasing and acceptable to God (Cf. 1Pt. 2, 5; Hebr. 13, 15-16). The first Christians were considered atheists, godless people, by Jews and Romans alike, because the followers of Jesus, who asked them to worship the Father in spirit and truth (Jn. 4, 23-24), had in the beginning no temples or churches. When Christianity became 'settled', 'established', after the persecutions, they built churches and the reproach of godlessness disappeared from the books of the historians. Paul questioned the distinction between the sacred and the secular. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor: 10, 31; Cf. Acts 10, 9-16). That is why our commitment to God expressed in our concern for a just and truly human rebuilding of our society is 'spiritual worship'. In this light Vatican II dares to state that our eschatological hope does not weaken, but stimulates our commitment to a better world²¹. However, as long as we have not reached the Eschaton, this spiritual worship is impossible without explicit worship. Secular liturgy must be embedded in explicit liturgy. Hence the first sentence of no. 10 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy can be re-formulated as follows: "Explicit liturgy is the summit towards which the secular liturgy of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all the strength to make our life one act of secular worship flows."

Explicit worship

As long as we have not reached the Eschaton, man's relationship with God must find visible and palpable forms and expression, otherwise it falls outside the realm of our experience and the whole sacramental order of the Church would prove unnecessary. Surely, we must express our commitment to God in our wholehearted commitment to the world, but this by no means makes the direct and explicit expression of our love of God superfluous. St Thomas had already taught that worship

20. Idem, p. 98.

21. *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 39 and 43.

is not necessary because of God but because of man himself²² A person who says that he worships God implicitly by his commitment to the world and mankind, has already confessed that he has a relationship with God; otherwise he would not know this implication of his secular concern. This man then has to do justice to his belief in God and in this dimension of his secular commitment; and this happens in explicit worship and liturgy. A man who loves his wife has to express this love explicitly, at least from time to time: otherwise his love will gradually diminish and soon this dimension of his activity will be lost. Similarly the person who lives his life in the world as a response to God's love, has to express his love for God in praise and thanksgiving, which in themselves are meaningless without the secular commitment. Man himself needs explicit worship in order to give implicit worship,

In former ages, we often spoke of the building of the new earth; today, in the anthropocentric era, we speak rather in terms of human relationships. Hence we speak of the new history, the new city, where there will be no need for a temple, where God's glory is the light and the Lamb is its lamp, the city into which the kings of the earth shall bring their glory (Cf. Rev. 21, 22-27). That is why our expressions of praise and thanksgiving primarily take place in the context of human relationships. In them man experiences first and foremost the love and concern of the transcendent God. So the *koinonia* the community aspect, should receive much attention in modern liturgical celebrations: God's presence in the assembled people. Although we do not have a blueprint of the tomorrow, towards which we are on pilgrimage, we believe that the future will be a form of *koinonia* of community, of communion, where God will be with men, and men will be with God. Christ inaugurated that *koinonia* on earth. It is our mission to make our communities provisional anticipations of that future communion with Father, Son and Spirit, who are so deeply involved in love that we confess our faith in one God.

In this way true liturgy or worship is the authentic expression and celebration of the living faith of a gathered com-

2. II-II, q. 91, a, 1 ad 3.

munity in the presence of God. Such a liturgy will help and inspire the participants, who are all celebrants, to respond to God's greatness and love by their commitment to bring the universe, mankind and every man and woman to their fullest self, which is God's will and the purpose of world history. This in Christ has become once and for all salvation history, the history of the liberation of each and every man and woman.

Liturgy and youth liturgy.

Had the existing liturgy and worship corresponded to the above definition, the question of meaningful worship for young people would never have arisen; the existing liturgy would be relevant for our young men and women. We would only need a special liturgy for children, who are still unable to participate in the world of the adults. The existing liturgy is irrelevant for adults. The definition leaves open the possibility that in places where something like a generation gap is felt between youth and their elders, young people can and should have their own liturgy, a liturgy which corresponds to their particular needs, hopes and aspirations. The article on 'group liturgies' will certainly elaborate this possibility.

As soon as liturgy is no longer prescribed or imposed from a universal or even a regional centre and has become the authentic creation of the assembled community most of the existing difficulties regarding indianization, indigenization, adaptation, and so on, will disappear, because the celebrant and his people can best decide what is the authentic expression of the living faith of that particular community. It has been well said by Herman Schmidt, Professor of Liturgy at the Gregorian University and at the Liturgical Institute of St Anselm in Rome that

The way is open for a contemporary proclamation of the Word, for a dynamic sacramental life.... It was impossible to renew the liturgy through the normal channels, that is, from the bottom up; for after centuries of inactivity the local Churches were not equipped for that. The new liturgical books.... should activate Christian activity in the immense pluriformity of the Roman Catholic Church. For a transitional period the way followed must be rated the only possible realistic solution. But that is not the end of the matter: our

liturgical life will no longer be uneventful, as it was before, but will go on developing in accordance with the needs and demands of the future. In the new liturgy the Holy spirit is not imprisoned in a golden cage²³.

This implies that the priests of today, who generally are the liturgical leaders in the local communities, will have to become highly sensitive to the traditions, customs, feelings and aspirations of their congregations. Some congregations more will be attuned to the culture of our 'global village'; others will spontaneously express themselves more in a traditionally 'Indian' way. The priests should, on the one hand, be aware that they are 'servants' of the people, called to enable them to express their living faith authentically, and on the other hand, they should also be aware that secular India is still flooded with a multitude of enslaving and oppressive inheritances that stand in the way of her development towards the 'holy city', of which the Book of Revelation speaks.

Principles of worship-building

Since the principles of worship-building with special reference to the youth in India have already been published elsewhere²⁴, I mention them here only in brief:

1) Worship must be actual and situational

There must be a clear connexion between the worship we celebrate and the actual life that we lead, e. g. as students in the India of 1972 in this particular place, in this particular college.

23. Herman Schmidt, 'Liturgy and Modern Society', an analysis of the current situation, in:

Concilium, II/7 (February 1971), p. 28.

24. See: Gerwin van Leeuwen, *Worship in Youth's Idiom*, Ecumenical Christian Centre Publication, Bangalore, 1971, p. 18-23; *Relevance*, Christian Youth Organizations in India Today, Edited by Rev. M. A. Thomas, Ecumenical Christian Centre Publication, Bangalore, 1971, p. 16-20).

2) Worship must be sincere and honest

We should praise and thank God for things we really appreciate, and pray for things we really believe in, i. e. for things for which we are prepared to work in order to make them a reality. For example, when we pray for social justice, we, as a gathered community, must really be concerned about social justice and express that concern in action.

3) Worship must bring out the revolutionary power of the Gospel

Our liturgical service should bring out the fact that we are committed to living according to the gospel, which criticizes our Christian living day after day. Hence we must be prepared to review our life again and again in the light of the ever-living Word of God. The participants will then discover together the radical and liberating power of God's Word.

4) Worship must use modern language and utilize the modern communication media

Not seldom do youth's heroes fulfil the role of the biblical prophets and proclaim Christ's message, e. g. of peace, of love, of brotherhood, of protest against the *status quo* and so on, in the language that youth appreciates. Why can not we use their songs and poems? In a totally different cultural context Karl Rahner once wrote, "A preacher of God's Word should be in touch with the Beatles' fans, if he is to avoid preaching his own predilections. These songs provide a sound introduction to the Beatles' fans who find in them *their own experience of life*" One thing is certain; if the Churches do not succeed in creating a truly relevant liturgy and in putting Christ's message in contemporary language, sound and action, they will never be 'the light of the world' and the 'salt of the earth.' Since we together constitute the Church, all of us are responsible.

5) Worship must break through the compartmentalization of the sacred and the secular, of religion and life

This is clear in the light of the first part of this article.

A few practical hints regarding meaningful youth services

Spontaneity is undoubtedly an important characteristic of a living liturgy and our youth dread all that is static and monotonous. Spontaneity in worship, however, needs careful preparation and even training, particularly when greater groups are involved. Spontaneity and preparation, or practice beforehand, are by no means mutually exclusive realities.

Clarence Jos Rivers writes: "Don't be fooled. Spontaneity takes a great deal of practice. Spontaneity is an illusion. A great deal of exercise is required before an expression can appear spontaneous."

For example, an Indian dancer is far more spontaneous and creative after years of thorough exercise and training than when she begins²⁵,

The work group

The preparation for a liturgical service is not the work of the presiding priest alone, but that of the priest with the celebrating community. A participation of all in the preparation is possible in the case of 'group liturgies' where the number of participants is usually limited. When the liturgical service is for a larger community, the liturgical leader will have to work with a work group, which will be responsible for the preparation. Apart from the fact that this preparation with a representative group of the liturgical community is necessary to make the celebration truly an authentic expression of the living faith of that community, this preparatory work is one of the most affective opportunities for the deepening of the faith of those who are involved. As many as possible, therefore, should be allotted particular responsibilities for the preparation.

One group could begin with the selection of the theme for the liturgical service, develop that theme, select the appropriate readings²⁶, and try to discover the Christian message to be conveyed to the whole congregation. A second group can be responsible for

25. *Worship in Youth's Idiom*, p. 23-24.

26. *Idem*, p. 30-31.

the text writing, a third can select hymns and songs and practise them with the choir and the whole congregation. A fourth group can look after the publicity and decorations. It is good to have a co-ordinator to see that all the work of the different groups is done and that the whole service runs smoothly.

The success or the failure of youth services depends mainly on this preparation with youth. The more they are involved and the more the celebrant is able to attune himself to them, the greater will be the participation and enthusiasm, and the greater the chance that the celebration will become a true 'happening'.

Participation of all

In order to foster the active participation of the whole community we should select a place, the atmosphere of which easily creates a community spirit. Posters, background music, decorations and the seating arrangements should be utilized to make the group a community. A distinction between those who 'do' or 'make' the service and the other participants who 'have nothing to do' should be avoided as far as possible. The soloists, the choir, the band, the celebrant, and the actor in a role play or dramatization have to be specially careful not to make the service a 'show' or 'performance'.

Youth and their elders

Often the fear has been expressed that special services for youth will widen the already frightening gap between the generations. In the cities and industrialized areas, where such a generation gap already exists, youth will eagerly look out for an authentic liturgy, particularly relevant to young people. This is in no way disastrous; it can even become a blessing. Youth can become instrumental in the liturgical renewal of the whole parish. The older generation is generally more attached to the existing forms of worship than the young, who often only reluctantly attend the traditional services. The experience of the present author is that when the latter get a chance to express their living faith liturgically and good services are conducted thanks to their zeal, parents begin to wonder what makes their sons and daughters suddenly so enthusiastic about worship services even to the extent that they do not mind spending time in preparing them: text --

writing, choir practice, reading practice, and so on. This often leads to the next step; parents—perhaps out of curiosity in the beginning—go with their teenagers to attend these services. Many do not stop after attending them once or twice. When they see with their own eyes that this is a real celebration of the Christian faith, they begin to experience what authentic liturgy is and become not seldom animators among their own generation.

Conclusion

It will be agreed that some patching up at the fringes of the existing liturgical celebrations is like trying to put new wine in old wineskins, practice which Christ himself condemned as rather foolish. Since all of us constitute the Church and are responsible for its welfare and mission, every one of us is called to think boldly and freely how to create a liturgy so meaningful that we are eager to come together to celebrate and say thanks to the Father for all the exciting things he is doing through Christ in our motherland. This liturgy, however, which calls us together with so much force, should at the same time be such that we, strengthened by Jesus' Body and Blood and enlightend and inspired by his Word, are equally eager to go out and work with our fellow citizens for the "new Jerusalem", where God will be with us not only as the One who wipes away every tear and puts an end to death, to mourning and crying and pain, but also as the One, who sees to the arrangement of the delightful wedding feasts, where laughter rings out, where the dance has just begun, and the best wine is still to be served²⁷. When the worshipping community provisionally reflects this communion of God with men, in which celebration and liberation go hand in hand, liturgy becomes true liturgy. It is the summit towards which all our secular worship is directed and the fountain from which all our strength to make our life in the world one act of worship flows.

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Gerwin van Leeuwen

²⁷. Cf. Harvey Cox, o. c., p. 162.

Group Liturgies

According to the Instruction of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, the deepening and intensifying of Christian life is the goal of opening up the possibility of liturgical celebration in small groups. When speaking of group liturgies, adapted to the circumstances of particular groups, we are considering liturgy as what it is meant to be to Christians, a source of spiritual vitality, an oblation of their lives committed to Christ, and a catechesis of Christian teaching. This article will deal solely with the liturgy of the mass, which is the central question in any discussion on group liturgy.

For most Christians the ordinary masses in a large, urban parish seem incapable of being a real experience of what the Eucharistic liturgy is meant to be. An experience of this kind is possible only in a mass for a small permanent community. Father Gerwin van Leeuwen O. F. M. in an article entitled "Small Group Liturgy, Home Liturgy, Liturgy for Special Gathering" suggests that it might be better to speak of liturgy for permanent and non-permanent communities rather than of group liturgies. Any group of Christians meeting in any role need not constitute a community in which one can experience Christian fellowship (communion), in which mass should be celebrated as it was by the first Christians.

The Qahal Yahweh (the Assembly of Yahweh), as described in Exodus Chapters 19-24, 2 Kings 23: 1-4, Nehemias 8-10, shows how modern Christian Eucharistic liturgy, down to its details, developed from the Jewish liturgy and the Jewish hope of a perfect covenant. It is a product, humanly speaking, of the Hebrew mind. The Qahal Yahweh, the scripture service in the synagogue, the sacred community meals, are all combined and harmonised in the mass. The people of God assemble, there is a preliminary rite of purification and penitential rites. Readings from the Scriptures are acclaimed and thanked for. The blessing of the gifts and the celebration of the Covenant in the consecration and communion follow. The very words normally used in the various

prayers have come down directly from the Jews. The liturgy forms, for this very reason, the ideal catechesis and would undoubtedly be felt to be so by the members of a small properly-prepared group. How far then is it advisable to adapt the formulas used in the mass? This is of special importance when speaking of group liturgies for it is in these groups that adaptation is most often undertaken.

Adaptation is necessary to make our Liturgies relevant to those participating and the whole point of group liturgies is precisely this. Community is a fusion of feeling and thought, of tradition and commitment, of membership and volition" (Robert Nishert, quoted by Fr. Van Leeuwen in his article on group liturgies). If this is so, a man must be a member of a community in his totality. Men today seek membership of such communities more than ever, the tendency of modern life being to make a man a member of many different groups, playing a different role in each. The formation of rather Utopian rural communities by a number of groups of Americans all seeking a return to nature in close union with a group of like-minded people is a symptom of one of the troubles afflicting modern society. The parish mass surely does little to show that all true community is founded in Christ who broke down the walls of our mutual hostility. Group liturgy might be a step in the right direction. There are already in existence groups for whom such masses are feasible and useful. They could be celebrated for families for special occasions, for groups of families living in the same neighbourhood, for religious communities, for apostolic communities, for youth clubs and other associations, the staff of particular places of work, groups at seminars and camps, and so on.

However there are certain basic characteristics which make a group liturgy truly meaningful and an aid to living out one's Christian life:

- 1) There should be a *homogeneous group*, e. g. of students, factory workers, children, a block of families etc. The liturgy should be geared to a particular grouping of people with like interests and thought patterns.
- 2) The *group* should be *small* enough to give each one an opportunity of real participation and sharing. The large numbers

at parish masses make this impossible, though this need not mean that group masses make genuine participation at parish masses difficult. In fact, the community should prepare those who attend them to participate more fully in masses for larger groups, where the elements of homogeneity and togetherness may not be obvious. Masses for larger groups, of which the ordinary parish mass is most common and typical, serve to reflect the universality of the Church, and demand of each Christian that he be ready to be one with all men before the altar of God. The implications of this demand will become clearer to the Christian at a small community mass. There he will also grow in the human sense of solidarity with his brothers, and this should help to counteract the tendency of Church congregations to be large groups of isolated individuals who seem to prove that a man is never so much alone as in a crowd. The natural sense of solidarity should deepen into an understanding of being a member of a race re-deemed by Christ — “You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord” (Eph. 11:14-20). Experience shows that parish masses seem ineffectual in ‘bringing hostility to an end’. So many people attend mass without their lives being in the slightest way touched or transformed by it: the power of Christ has not touched them. There has been no deepening or intensification of their Christian life by the liturgy. How few have any understanding of being fellow-citizens, stones built into one holy temple? This is obvious from the lack of an apostolic outlook on the world, from the purely formal attendance of so many. Group masses should lead to a real understanding of the reason for the obligatory Saturday evening or Sunday mass. Rather than draw people away from Sunday masses and parish masses they should eventually increase attendance at them.

3) The group should be an *open group*, i. e., the group mass should in principle be open to any Christian, Bouyer in *Life and Liturgy* says that, “it was always possible for a guest or for a slave brought into the family to partake in the Passover meal. And the condition for such participation was that he be voluntarily added to the family, and then his participation in

the Passover meal became a consecration of this bond of adoption." Such a spirit of total welcome must pervade a community mass or any community enterprise, if it is to be truly Christian. The tendency of a group to be turned in on itself is even humanly self-destructive. The spirit of total openness to the world, and the recognition of being an organ of the whole Church, must show itself in the prayers of the celebrant and of the participants in the mass.

4) The liturgy should be a *genuine expression of the needs of the group*, both spiritual and material. A child of seven with his growing sense of wonder, self-awareness, security, will have different spiritual needs from a professional businessman, who may need a growth in integrity, relationships, family duties, etc.

5) The liturgy of a group should have *the normal mode of expression of that group*. The language used should be contemporary and intelligible to all present. The prayers should speak of the concepts and concerns of their psychological world. The language which a student uses with his contemporaries, for instance, may be different from that which he uses with his elders. The *music* should be the appropriate expression of the culture of the group, which may be an in-group culture; it could be pop music or *bhajans*, suitable to the group. The *gestures* too should be appropriate to the age and kind of people who are praying the liturgy. The older generation, or patients in hospital-beds, cannot be expected to do what hippies or small children, who cannot keep still for long, would do. At a First Communion ceremony in France, after receiving the Lord, the children stood in a semi-circle with their hands on each other's shoulders, making their thanksgiving thus united together to the Lord and to each other. The gesture brought home to them that Holy Communion is essentially a communitarian act, in a way that the gesture of having one's head buried in one's breast in solitude would not have done.

Some examples of *different types of liturgies for different types of people* might help. There are various needs according to whether the groups are rural or urban, according to religions and languages, age groups and movements. Like experimental centres the concern of these group liturgies is to remain integrated in their milieux.

Thus in London, at a mass for university students, the group sat round the seminar table with bread and a bottle of wine placed on it. All of them were engaged in a search for truth, using their minds through their different disciplines. Their prayer arose out of their experience in their own field of study. After the celebration, for the agape, cheese, coffee and some more bread were put on the same table.

An Italian priest in Mexico who celebrates mass for his hippies has quite a different experience during their "Jesus-trip", from a group of young priests sitting in a semi-circle on the floor chanting in Malayalam a devotional Indian mass at an experimental centre in Bangalore. It was such a moving experience that even those of us who did not know the language could truly pray. A similar experience was enjoyed by a group of about 25 men and women attending a month's seminar on 'Indian Spirituality' in an ashram setting. The liturgy was the central act of the day for them as it arose out of their daily life and study of the Upaniṣads in the light of the Christian Scriptures. Preceded by early morning meditation and followed by recorded Indian religious music at breakfast, the celebration was marked by a Sanskrit invocation at the beginning (which meant something to the participants who were steeped in the classical and religious literature of our Hindu-brothers), a reading from the Bhagavad Gita or the Upaniṣads chosen to fit in with the Bible readings and theme for the day, followed by the sharing of views and prayers at the homily, an *arati* performed at various parts of the celebration, the greatest one being at the '*per ipsum*' and all interspersed by chants and *bhajans*. Many who are not in favour of what has begun to be known as "the Indian mass" (though this is but the beginning of a long evolutionary process which will culminate in a truly Indian liturgy only when we have an indigenous theology and an Indian way of life) have been impressed by the really prayerful, I would almost say, contemplative atmosphere during this liturgy. Before this type of Liturgy or any group liturgy becomes widespread, there will have to be a great deal of education and psychological preparation.

Preparation, both remote and immediate, is in fact essential if the group liturgy is to be really vital, i. e. life-giving. The degree of 'fusion of thought and feeling' will obviously vary with

each category, but with a sufficient amount of remote preparation the members of these groups will come to an understanding of their very real oneness in Christ and of His power to strengthen this oneness in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Thorough participation is an absolute 'must'. The participants must have an understanding of the meaning of the liturgy. An outstanding number of modern Christians have either very little knowledge or quite mistaken notions of the meaning of the mass. This has been found to be true even with first-year college students who can hardly have had the time to forget all the catechism they learnt in their Catholic schools. They must also have some familiarity with reading the Scriptures, reflecting on them, and accepting their implication. A community mass is very demanding and its demands must be brought home to the participants. It demands the readiness to forgive completely, to confess one's faults and to accept the forgiveness of the community, to bring one's thoughts, aspirations, struggles before the community, to share in the joys and sufferings of others and to join in giving thanks. All this means that those who participate must be mature adults and mature Christians. Obviously children's group masses will require a different kind of preparation according to their age and understanding.

Para-liturgies can be of great help in preparing people to participate more and more fully in a community mass. These liturgies could take the form of Bible or penitential services, so framed as to allow much scope for individual contributions.

Immediate preparation for the mass must include the choice of a relevant theme, a choice of readings and acclamations, choice and preparation of the place of celebration, choice of music, a meeting with the celebrant, choice of style of the mass etc. Every participant must know what is going to happen during the liturgy and why, leaving room always for a certain amount of spontaneity. Despite the need for spontaneity and genuineness, care must be taken in the preparation of the place of celebration, and in every other aspect of the mass. Everything should dispose the celebrants to reverence; nothing should distract. I remember attending a couple of celebrations in the U. S. A. in a drawing-room where the spontaneity was evident but a certain lack of reverence took away from the beauty of the whole especially the nonchalant way in which the main celebrant sat on an arm-chair.

Beauty and harmony draw the mind to God. The participants might like to bring symbols of their various activities to the altar at the offertory. At a college mass for instance, books, account books, musical instruments, a tennis-racket and a dancer's anklets, were among the things brought forward. Readings from non-Christian Scriptures or from secular sources could be included where this is allowed. At an Independence Day celebration in an experimental centre for liturgy, for instance, the Prime Minister's Speech was included in the first part of the mass. A great deal that cannot be done during the mass itself for one reason or another, can be done before as a preparation leading up to it. Such adaptation should be carefully prepared for, so that the unity and harmony of the mass is preserved.

The celebrant's role

Adaptations to a particular group and its need obviously demand something from the celebrant. He must be able to understand the mentality of the group, enter into its spirit, be creative and allow for spontaneity. He must be ready to do his best to insure that the liturgy is truly the expression of the life of the group. He may be called upon to say mass for a group of young people who have made "pop culture" their own, for instance, or for an experimental group far advanced in the 'Indianization of the Liturgy'. Inevitably however, he must give also something of his own personality and experience. This is always enriching.

Religious Communities

Perhaps group masses are most frequently said for religious communities. In the post-Vatican renewal of religious life much stress has been laid on community-building, on the fostering of friendships, of inter-personal relationships, and religious are naturally convinced that the best place to build a community is round the altar. The stress on togetherness, should not, of course, lead us to lose sight of the fact that the mass is more than a community-building party. Nor should we forget that it is Christ who has reconciled us to each other, making us one by the blood of the Cross, and that our efforts at union are fruitful only in Him. If group masses are to be efficacious in their function of redeeming our lives, we must in humility and hope wait for Him who "shall come as a pent-up stream impelled by the breath of

Yahweh; to Zion He shall come as redeemer, to those who turn from their faults" (Is. 59; 19-20).

Slowly but surely group liturgies are spreading in both our educational institutions and parishes. Their value will be seen more and more as they make a vital difference in the lives of the participants. If liturgy is to be alive and relevant there will always have to be pioneering groups of those with imagination and courage who can read the signs of the times. Such groups must have freedom to experiment and the trust of those in authority. Only then will the Church in India grow to her full stature and bring through her liturgy her own cultural genius to the feet of Christ.

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Liturgical Spirituality

The spirituality of the Church

Spirituality in the Church is a particular way of conceiving and realizing the Christian life. Though the goal of Christian perfection is the same, the triune God, and the way of reaching that goal is also substantially the same, incorporation in Christ, there is room for particular spiritualities in the Church, e. g. Carmelite or Franciscan, according to the temperament, station in life or theological conceptions of particular individuals or groups. All the same every Christian 'spirituality' must have the same basic common orientations which characterize simply *the* spirituality of the Church. This is derived from the central activity of the Church or the liturgy in which she gathers the faithful to offer public worship to God as the holy People of God. They are expected to reproduce in their lives what they sacramentally experience in the liturgical celebration.

Liturgy is the mainspring of Christian life. If worship and daily life are intimately united, we have a liturgy that is relevant and fruitful, and a spirituality that is authentically founded on the living mystery of Christ. If the two are separated, we have mere ritualistic formalism and a morality that is artificial and juridical or naively humanistic.

In the ancient Church, the bond between worship and daily life was perfectly realized. The fruits of sanctity were nourished in the liturgy. The ardent love of Christ which imparted strength and joy to the martyrs, the ideal of chastity which moved the virgins, the delicacy of fraternal love which made the brethren 'one heart and one soul' (Acts 4: 32), were all inspired by the sacred rites of the liturgy. The acts of the martyrs offer eloquent testimony of the liturgical spirit which animated the confessors of the faith. The words that came spontaneously from their lips at the supreme moment of their trial were often the same expressions that they were accustomed to use in liturgical celebrations. The gestures with which they

bade farewell to their brethren were the same as those of liturgical gatherings. It was the same mystery of Christ that was celebrated in the liturgy and lived in the ordinary events of life or manifested in extraordinary events like martyrdom.

The ancient liturgy was known for its depth and sobriety. Gradually, however, there was increasing solemnity, which while satisfying the emotions of the participants for long increasingly became formalistic and devoid of spirit. People who were desirous of spiritual perfection fostered ascetical practices and private devotions not sufficiently related to the liturgy. The rites of the Church themselves were appreciated only in so far as they were matters of duty, or offered a means of purification which was often understood in a too individualistic or mechanical way. Many efforts were made, especially during the Council of Trent, to counteract this divorce between liturgy and Christian perfection. But it is only of late that the revival of liturgical spirituality seems to have been making considerable headway.

Vatican II has declared that "the liturgy is the *summit* toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the *fountain* from which all her power flows.... The renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and man draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them afire. From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist as from a fountain, grace is channelled into us, and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as towards their goal, are most powerfully achieved" (Const. on the Liturgy, art. 10).

Movement of the whole man towards God

Man not only has a body, but *is* a body vivified by a spiritual soul. If the body is conditioned by the soul, it influences and conditions the soul in turn. The body is the soul's instrument for attaining the welfare of the whole human person. It is the means of communication between men and hence the basis of human society.

Once God wills to divinize man, respecting his manner of being and activity, we can expect Him to use the body and

sensory experience to bring this about. Through this means the divine is present to the human and operates through the human, including sensory activity, in order to communicate to man participation in the divinity. This is the fundamental law of sacramentality. Again, if the communication of divine life is to be made in the context of man's social nature, it can only be in an incarnate and sacramental manner. And since man through the body is bound to material creation, his divinization as regards the body in some way involves the whole cosmos.

The physical body of the incarnate Son of God is the source and pivotal point of every divine communication to man and consequently of cosmic unity as well. Hence the transmission of divine life is linked with material things and sensory acts. Faith and sacraments put man in saving contact with Christ's Flesh and with what He did and suffered in his Flesh.

Liturgy then fosters a deep appreciation of the body and all bodily activities. It constantly reminds us that the body, far from being evil, is the expression of the spirit and an instrument of sanctification. It helps us to transcend the dichotomy between body and soul from which Christians from the East and the West suffer because of imperfect philosophical conceptions.

The importance of this point for sexual morality is easy to see. It should also help to renew our understanding and practice of Christian mortification. This does not consist in despoiling or torturing the body so that the soul might thrive, but in subduing or 'putting to death whatever is carnal' or disordered in our lives (cf. Col. 3:5; Rom. 8:13).

Sacredness of temporal realities :

In consequence of the Christian mystery which is celebrated in the liturgy, the world acquires an entirely new significance. Now the things of the world which are an extension of the human body have a new value beyond their own natural value. They appear as symbols or effective signs of the personal activity of God wishing to share His own life with men. Thus the water of Baptism, the bread of the Eucharist and so on become signs and means by which man is taken up into the sphere of the divine.

Hence man has not got to abandon earthly reality in order to realize union with God. On the contrary, it is through the body and the things of the world that he expresses his religious attitudes and reaches God.

Christ has bridged the gulf between the profane and the sacred. In Christ everything is redeemed and sanctified. It is significant that the act of redemption itself was performed not with liturgical solemnity but through fidelity to God in a human conflict situation in history, whatever religious dimension it may have had. Thus in the 'new creation' accomplished by Christ, the secular reality itself can be realized as worship.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman: "The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (Jn. 4: 23). So Paul exhorts the Romans that they should present their bodies "as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Rom 12: 1). 'Body' in Semitic usage means all that belongs to man: the human person with all its secular implications. Christian life in the world being concerned with the world and all its problems must be, for the Christian, aspects of worship of God. Life in the world shared with one's fellowmen must be a 'spiritual sacrifice'. Profane or secular activity, especially commitment to the ordering of human society, and uncompromising opposition to injustice, should become the expression of mankind's striving to reach God. As Irenaeus puts it, "God's glory is living man."

But this 'Christian secularization', rightly understood, does not exclude the need for special acts of worship. The worship of God expressed in and through secular activity for the good of mankind calls for grateful celebration in the liturgy of the Church if it is to find its full depth and value. Human life is not fully meaningful without 'eucharistic' (thanksgiving) celebration. Intensive commitment to the service of one's fellowmen should flow out of the 'festal gathering' (Heb 12: 22) in which the source of fraternity is experienced in explicit praise of the common Father of all mankind.

On the other hand, the explicit worship of God in the liturgy is without any value if the reality of 'secular worship' that sustains it, viz. dedication to the service of mankind, is

not present. St Thomas remarks that "visiting widows and orphans" (a typically medieval form of social service) is itself religious but this is expressed more immediately by acts of adoration and sacrifice (S. Th., 2 2ae, q. 81, a. 1, ad 1).

Hence secular activity and liturgy are not alternatives as, unfortunately, some people think today. It is a pity that many people moved by ardent longing to right the wrongs in society find that worship is irrelevant to their concerns or that some get so involved in some fine point regarding the ritual that they seem to be oblivious of the tremendous problems confronting contemporary society. The liturgical celebration must be seen as a call to Christian commitment to mankind according to the concrete situation of the historical moment. It may be noted that the synoptics recount the institution of the Eucharist while John relates the event of the washing of the disciples' feet, the reality that is signified and to be realized, viz. fraternal service. Paul, after narrating the institution of the Eucharist in 1 Cor 11, at once goes on to explain its fruit, viz., active charity in Christ.

The building up of a community

The Church herself is both the eucharistic community, or the assembly of the People of God for the celebration of the paschal mystery of Christ and the *sacramentum mundi*, the 'sign of the world' or the whole of mankind united and brought into intimate union with God. We celebrate in the liturgy of the Church what is being accomplished in human history, so that the latter becomes in some way 'salvation history' and through this humanity is drawn into the mystery of Christ and thus finds its deepest fulfilment.

Christ came to 'gather together the scattered children of God' (cf. Eph 1:4-10). It is through the sacramental activity of the Church that this is now coming to pass. While man is established in a right relationship with God, a community is also being created. 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor 10: 16-17). The individual

participates in the death and resurrection of Christ through the act of self-transcendence by which he goes out of himself in love toward his fellowmen. He dies to himself and rises to a new life in Christ in so far as he enters into a new relationship with them. The liturgy provides the basic experience of encountering other persons as brethren in Jesus Christ.

The sacraments are effective signs of the New Covenant and hence invitations to unity and fellowship. They are a social ferment that is effective in binding men together in the everyday events of life. The importance of Baptism and Eucharist for the realization of community is well recognized. Penance has also a significant role in building up the Christian community. It is the sacramental reconciliation, not only with God, but also with the community. In ancient times, absolution was called 'receiving peace of the Church'. It was believed that the sinner who had offended God by harming the community had to return to God through reconciliation with the community. This aspect of Penance needs to be emphasized more. Man suffers from alienation from God and from other men. He also suffers from disharmony within himself. The sacrament of Reconciliation heals this alienation and disharmony. It brings about a profound peace, not always sensibly felt, in the depths of the personality. Today it should be a powerful means of mutual reconciliation in the Church and the world.

Union and reconciliation through the sacraments should make Christians in India a model community and a source of peace and amity. The genuineness of liturgical worship may be gauged from its effect in overcoming caste and other social barriers. All those who are involved in the current liturgical renewal must keep this uppermost in their minds lest we should have mere changes in forms and words without a real renewal of minds and hearts.

The call to Commitment

The liturgical movement closely resembles salvation history in that we see throughout a pattern of revelation and response. God revealing Himself as a loving Father and seeking to evoke a response of faith in man. In Scripture we read of the wonderful saving events of God's intervention on behalf of man. Through

the liturgy this saving activity continues to be present to men today. As man was called to commitment by God through those saving events, he is likewise called today through the same acts made sacramentally effective. God's love for man manifests itself most eminently in the gift of His Son. Man's basic response to God's self-revelation and self-communication is faith, a total surrender of self. This implies a movement of love of God and love of neighbour, i. e. commitment to service.

In the liturgical celebration, the Christian makes a commitment to the whole Christ, to participate in building up the Body of Christ through a life of dedicated service. In his spiritual or moral life, he lives out the implications of this commitment. In the liturgy the Christian accepts in a general but unconditional way the demands of service to neighbour: in his daily life he responds to these demands in the concrete. The commitment to service made in the liturgy needs to be localized, particularized and concretized. As the one eternal covenant is renewed day after day through changing times and circumstances, every specification of the basic act becomes a mediation of a fundamental response to the covenant of love. The liturgy actuates the covenant in such a way that Christian morality becomes a mediation of the covenant union with God.

Christian morality, contrary to what was often thought, is not the performance of isolated good actions, or mere conformity to laws in a more or less mechanical style. Every act is the expression of the basic option made in the core of one's personality. Baptism is the first call to this fundamental option which has to be personally ratified when one reaches maturity. It would be very fruitful to regard Confirmation as the sacrament of Christian maturity when the young Christian personally assumes responsibility in the Christian community. This would be brought out clearly if the sacrament is received at a time when the person is likely to make his fundamental moral option, (though there are valid reasons for the Oriental custom of giving the sacrament together with Baptism in infancy).

Attitudes derived from the liturgy form the basis of a rich moral life, especially a maximal rather than a minimal moral life. While legalistic morality is preoccupied with the material

observance of the minimal requirements of the law, liturgical morality invites us to ever deeper degrees of dedicated service.

Personalism

Christian morality is a personal response to the call of God to commit oneself to others in love. The personal dimension may be said to be the most characteristic of Christian morality. Proper celebration of the sacraments fosters a deep awareness of personal relationships. The sacraments are not *things* to be used for one's spiritual profit, but sacred *actions* in which there is a *personal encounter* between the Christian and Christ in the community. The liturgy is structured as a *dialogue* in which there is an interchange of revelation and response. It begins with attentive listening to the Word of God making a personal call here and now. There is the response of faith or total self-surrender to God which is to be expressed in commitment to service. Liturgical dialogue demands openness which is an essential requirement for any genuine inter-personal exchange. This attitude of openness is to be carried over into one's daily intercourse with other people so that every action becomes a personal encounter, an element of the I-Thou relationship that should be cultivated between members of Christ's Body.

Other persons are not objects to be exploited even for one's 'spiritual good', but subjects of freedom to be respected and served. The moral response of the Christian is fundamentally a presence of service which is the fulfilment of the commitment made in a liturgical celebration. The concrete forms of service are determined by the objective demands of the situation. Hence, again, the authenticity of worship must be judged by incarnational forms of service according to the real needs of others. Otherwise one would be serving oneself in the guise of serving others, using them as means of one's self-perfection.

A genuine community is made up of real persons who have their own spiritual depth and riches. Hence a liturgical community presupposes that each person cultivates his personal spirituality so that he may have something to contribute to the assembly even while he is enriched by it. Whenever possible, the personal contribution should be explicitly fostered through spontaneous

prayers, and adaptation of rites and prayers to the temperament and needs of the particular group. Full advantage should be taken of the flexibility which the recent reform permits. But it would be to deform the liturgy in the name of personalism to give free vent to one's subjectivism and impose one's unduly subjective moods and preferences on others. Personalism whether in life or in the liturgy is a happy mean between individualism and collectivism. It preserves a balance between public worship and private prayer, between the development of one's own personality and association with others.

Paschal spirituality

The paschal mystery is the centre of every liturgical celebration. It also provides a programme for the Christian life. "Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you are really unleavened. For Christ, our paschal Lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor 5: 7-8).

The once-for-all event of Christ's sacrifice inaugurates and renders possible a new era for humanity. The history of the redeemed sons of God becomes, as it were, an extension of the 'hour' of Jesus (Jn 13:1). Sharing in the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ leads the Christian to live in union with the heavenly Christ, to tend towards the things that are above (cf. Col 3: 1-7).

The rabbis made use of the image of leaven to designate the evil inclinations of the heart which impede the accomplishment of the will of God. Abstention from leavened bread on the occasion of the Passover which opened the new year (cf Ex. 12:12) symbolized the desire to detach oneself from any impure element which might have infected the year that was ending. Christians have been 'washed, sanctified and justified' in Baptism (1 Cor 6:11). They should 'become what they are', and live a holy life in the sight of God. The disciple of Christ is already sharing in the Passover of Christ, so he should not be still in possession of the 'old leaven'. What a contradiction it would be! He has to renounce all sinful ways (Rom 6:12-14).

In this perspective, the fight against sin which is an essential component of the Christian life loses its negative character which seems to paralyze the life of so many Christians. It is not a question of fleeing from a taboo, but of conforming oneself to the mystery of Christ. The Christian is a 'new lump'. He is called to 'a newness of life' (Rom 6:4). "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1).

Christians are the 'light' in the Lord. They should "walk as children of light" (Eph 5:8). "So put away all malice and all guile and insincerity and envy and all slander" (1 Pet 2:1). In 1 Pet. Chapters 1 and 2, in which many exegetes see a paschal and baptismal catechesis, the paschal typology is exploited to the full in the course of an exhortation to complete purification and renewal of life. The blood of the Lamb without a stain has freed Christians from the 'futile ways inherited from your fathers' (1:18) in order that they may be 'holy in all their conduct' (1:14), and realize the true spiritual exodus from the darkness of former times 'to the marvellous light of God' (2:9).

Here we clearly see how moral rectitude and liturgical worship are intimately connected. The paschal mystery celebrated in the liturgy must be operative in one's life. It gives us a new being with the corresponding obligation of making our conduct conform to the demands of this new being. Paul describes this leading of a new life as 'celebration of the festival' (1 Cor 5:8). Liturgical sharing in the paschal mystery is the source of realizing its practical implications in order to accept its reverberations in our day-to-day life.

The entire Christian existence should have the joyful character of a feast since we are already participating in 'the Resurrection of Christ. "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice" (Phil 4:4). The joy of deliverance from evil should radiate from the heart of every Christian. That nostalgia for a feast without decline, underlying many Old Testament texts, finds its fulfilment in the heavenly liturgy, where the multitude of the redeemed singing the song of the Lamb (Rev 13:3), "follow the Lamb wherever he goes" (Rev 14:3). But already now we enjoy a foretaste of that heavenly joy. There is no place in Christian life for pessimism or anxious scrupulosity.

However; the experience of Christian joy in the present state is not without a sharing in the Cross of Christ. We have been "baptized into his death" (Rom 6:3). "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26). We do this not only in word or sign, but in the actual experience of painful suffering in our daily life. We are "always carrying in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal bodies" (2 Cor 4:4). In other words, through participation in the paschal mystery of Christ, our suffering becomes eminently fruitful. Here is the solution of the problem of evil in the world. Try as we may, we can never entirely banish suffering from our life. The broken Body of Christ hanging on the Cross and the Blood spurting from His wounds is definite proof that the Father loves us in spite of everything and that what often appears to be meaningless suffering can become a means of personal fulfilment and growth of the community, through union with the Passion of Christ mediated to us by the liturgy. During the Diocletian persecution (ca. 300), the martyrs of Abitana cried: "Without the Sunday Supper, we cannot live." The liturgy transforms and ennobles all the toil, pain and anxiety of men and gives them the courage and strength to rejoice even in the midst of the sufferings of this life because of the fruit that can be derived from them.

Christian morality: Life 'in Christ'

The classical presentation of Christian doctrine was as follows: 1) the articles of the Creed; 2) the sacraments; 3) the Commandments. The idea was that the sacraments should be seen as entering into vital contact with the mysteries of Christ and the Commandments as ways of living according to the demands of this encounter. But in the 18th century, the treatment of the sacraments in catechisms and moral treatises was placed after the commandments which came to occupy a central position in the scheme of instruction. With this displacement, the connection of the sacraments with the mysteries of Christ was obscured. They became above all aids in keeping the commandments. The mysteries of Christ became mere historical events or mere examples for imitation without vital significance and effective dynamism for the Christian life. This last was largely

reduced to the exact keeping of the Commandments, leaving room for a 'higher spirituality' for some chosen souls.

We are now experiencing the need for returning not only to the classical presentation, but to something like the mystagogic (sacramental) catechesis of St Cyril of Jerusalem in which Christian doctrine, worship and life are seen as different aspects of Christ's salvific mysteries. Recent moral theology emphasizes that Christian morality is participation in the life of Christ who is the archetype of all human and Christian existence, containing within Himself all our natural and supernatural potentialities. The person of the God-Man is itself the most concrete because He is the most original person and most universal because everything is founded in him the norm of morality. The programme of Christian life is a 'paschal programme', a passage of humanity with Christ to the Father, which implies for each Christian a progressive incorporation in Christ and a gradual adoption of His sentiments and attitudes. The Commandments must be seen only as the minimal expressions of our fidelity to Christ. Celebration of the mystery of Christ in the liturgy is a constant call to go beyond the minimum and strive daily to be more and more like Christ.

The mystery of Pentecost, a prolongation of the Resurrection and Ascension, appears in Christian tradition as the gift of the New Law to the People of God. The coming of the Spirit is compared to the theophany of Sinai. Moses ascended the holy mountain and brought down the two tablets of the Law. Christ, the new Moses, ascends into heaven and sends down the Holy Spirit who is Himself our New Law. This is the fulfilment of what the prophets foretold regarding the law which the Lord will imprint in the hearts of men in the New Covenant (cf. Jer 31: 31-33; Ez 36: 26-27).

Henceforth, the basic norm of the Christian life is not any external imperative, but an internal principle derived from our 'being in Christ'. The Spirit of Christ Himself acts in us so that we are 'led by the Spirit' (Rom 8: 14). The Holy Spirit becomes our 'law' by illuminating our minds and moving our wills to that which will bring about the full realization of our human and Christian potentialities.

The gift of the Spirit mainly comes to us through the sacraments which give us a new spiritual dynamism. The progressive divinization that results from a sharing in the mysteries of Christ in the liturgy is the basis of all genuine Christian mysticism. There may be degrees in mystical union with God and there may be special manifestations of them which are rare, but every Christian is called to the essence of mystical union which consists in immediate union with God through sharing in the life of Christ. This takes place 'in mystery' through the liturgy, and 'effectively' by reproduction of the pattern of Christ's life in our daily life. Hence, though there may be some justification for distinguishing between morality, spirituality and mysticism according to the intensity of union with God, the distinction should not be drawn too sharply. One should especially beware of reserving the higher reaches of Christian perfection, by whatever name they are called, for some special category of people while leaving to ordinary Christians the practice of the Commandments. The terms Christian morality and spirituality have been fused indiscriminatingly in this article to show that true Christian morality (not the moral minimalism that held the field for so long a time) is nothing other than Christian spirituality or living by the Spirit of Christ.

The action of the Holy Spirit is expressed by the virtue of charity. This *agape* is a divine gift since it springs from God's love for man (cf. 1 Jn 4:10) and is communicated by the salvific actions of Christ in the sacraments. Charity is not only the greatest of virtues but is the 'form' of all virtues inasmuch as it gives ultimate significance to them. Natural love is already the fundamental movement of our being by which we seek personal relationships with others and with our Creator. On the supernatural plane, charity is the principle by which our actions become manifestations of our sharing in the life of God and of brotherhood in God's family on earth.

One who is thoroughly penetrated by the divine *agape*, spontaneously fulfils the requirements of the law. St Augustine expressed this emphatically by saying: "Love and do what you want." Law has only a pedagogical function in guiding our imperfect minds and supporting our weakness until we have achieved full spiritual maturity. The liturgy of the Word constantly

reminds us of the primacy of love in Christian life and proposes concrete guidelines for expressing this love, lest self-love should be mistaken for genuine Christian love. The liturgy of the sacraments communicates to us the divine gift of love: it invites and enables us to share in the sacrificial love of Christ.

The gift of the Spirit and of His love gives us true Christian *freedom*. This does not consist in doing what we like or in providing 'an opportunity for the flesh' (Gal 5:13) but in ability to control one's disordered tendencies and even more in the ability to put oneself at the disposal of others. It, therefore, implies the atmosphere in which a person is open to others, gives himself to others and receives gratefully from others. The liturgy celebrates the freedom which the Lamb of God has earned for us by His Passover and which makes us the sons of God instead of slaves of sin and of the devil. One who is moved internally by the grace of the Spirit does not suffer the constraint of the law, but freely fulfils the will of God,

LOVE and Freedom which are the chief signs of maturity are not realized all at once. The sacraments do not produce them automatically, They are rather *calls to maturity*, to perfect openness and total response. Current spirituality is very preoccupied with the question of Christian maturity. A right understanding of the personal nature of the sacraments should help us considerably to see how they are the sources of true maturity.

Conclusion

The renewal of liturgy and spirituality go together. The key to both seems to be personalism. Liturgy must be understood as the worship of persons called together by God as the holy People of God in order that they may form a true community of love into which all humanity is to be drawn. Christian morality or spirituality is precisely the living out of this call to community, the exercising of the divine agape which is the most powerful force in the world for reconciliation, peace and unity.

BULLETIN-I

Worship in Hinduism

The goal of man's life according to Hindu Philosophy is God-realization. In Hinduism there are two conceptions regarding God: one an unqualified, formless and absolute state called *Parabrahman* and *Paramatma*, and the other a qualified, formed and relative state called *Īwara* and *Bhagavan*. Man would attain his ultimate goal only if the absolute *Parabrahman* is realized in identity with it. This state is reached when it is realized that our true and authentic self is in fact the state of the *Paramatma* which is without birth and death, and is all-pervading and one without a second. It is under a curse of ignorance (*ajñāna*) that everyone, beginning with the first man, is born and is journeying on earth. Man may attain the true knowledge of his own self only when he is liberated from this curse.

The authentic self of each of us is the perfect state of all good qualities. In ignorance of this truth and becoming subject to some sort of illusion (*maya*), we begin to think and become convinced that we in ourselves are imperfect. This indeed is pain. This life is an endeavour of our self, fallen from perfection into imperfection, to attain once again its original state of perfection. The human body is only a tool that the self assumes in this sojourn. When one tool has been used up it is set aside and another one is employed. Thus sojourning through deaths and rebirths we finally reach the goal—the perfect divinization. *jivatma-paramatma* union. That is the end of our journey.

This is what the *sanātana dharma* proposes as the goal of man's life. In the memorable saying that follows Swami Vivekananda expressed the same view: "Divinity dwells though hidden, in every living thing. The goal is to manifest this hidden divinity: the path is the control of nature, external as well as internal. Achieve this through action (*karma*), devotion (*bhakti*).

body control (*yoga*), and knowledge (*jñāna*) – through one, many, or all of these. Be liberated. This is the very substance of religion. According to *Smṛti* ‘the supreme *dharma* is to achieve self-realization through *yoga*.’ ”

In order to attain this goal of life four different paths have been proposed, all resulting in the control of nature, external as well as internal. They are union through action (*karmayoga*), union through the control of the body (*rajayoga*), union through devotion (*bhaktiyoga*) and union through wisdom (*jñānayoga*). The seekers after bliss may choose for themselves any of these as they prefer. In the opinion of spiritual preceptors, however, of all these paths the one of devotion is the most effective and easiest of practice.

What is essential to all these yoga systems is the practice of the control of mind and of emotion. Progress can be made in any of these techniques of *yoga* only by fighting against the temptations that come from outside, and by effectively checking the senses and mind which constantly get involved in things outside. *Bhaktiyoga*, however, is an exception: while using its techniques we need not take the trouble of keeping out stray thoughts and emotions. We need only direct towards God the thoughts and emotions that arise spontaneously. If we realize that God is the source of all good things and the very quintessence of all beauty and of all good qualities, it would not be difficult to divert to God our desires and attachments. As the ever-increasing love for God becomes strong and deep-rooted in the heart of the devotees there would be a corresponding decrease in the attraction of worldly things. Therefore the devotee need not make any special efforts to practise dispassion and detachment. Some of the means for growth in devotion are meditating on the acts of the Lord and offering homage to his image. So, as love for the Lord increases, the desire for worldly things is lessened; the control of mind also becomes easy. It is because *Bhakti-marga* is the easiest of the yogas that relatively more people have been attracted to it. And all religions have given the foremost place to devotion.

The goal of man's life is to realize the Supreme State which is beyond all modalities and forms which is indivisible and unimaginable, and one without a second. This is the way to

achieve liberation from the cycle of deaths and rebirths through an abiding awareness of the identity of the individual self with the supreme self. Through devotion to God as well as through supreme wisdom one attains the same goal. But is it easy to conceive an image of the Absolute Spirit that is beyond all form? Is it possible to meditate on it? A yogin has to gain this skill by using spiritual techniques for a long time and passing through many hardships. Of the thousands of people who strive along this path one may reach the goal, the Lord himself has said (Gita VIII. 3). The Gita speaks also about the difficulties encountered in seeking after the unmanifest Bhahman. A much easier path for the progress of the individual self the Lord has proposed in *baktiyoga*.

The path of devotion has several stages or phases. One of these is the worship of images or idols. For only some reality with a form and shape can become the object of the human mind. Ordinary people are unable to imagine a reality devoid of a definite form. It is for the convenience of the devotees that forms or modalities are assumed by Brahman which is pure spirit, one without a second, unqualified and without a form:

“For the benefit of devotees a form is attributed to Brahman
Which is pure spirit, one without a second unqualified and
incorporeal.”

Image-worship is an endeavour to comprehend the unmodified and formless Existence through images and forms that are congenial to man. It is the experience of almost everyone who strives to realize God that such image are necessary. When a devotee goes to the temple and takes part in a chanting of the Lord's name, in a prayer service or in worship, he forgets external things, becomes enraptured with the images of the Lord and approaches closer to his life's goal.

The majority of the great men who are revered today as spiritual preceptors and sages were image-worshippers. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has been acclaimed as the very embodiment of the eternal *dharma* in modern times; but it was through the worship of Bhavatarini Devi that he started his spiritual life and attained perfection. Swami Vivekananda who is certainly an authoritative proponent of the eternal *dharma*, once

said, if image-worship could produce a great soul like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa we would worship a thousand images at one stretch. Those who condemn image-worship without grasping the underlying principle, should remember one thing: even if we think that we are spirit and not body, as long as we are in need of a gross body to be aware of ourselves, we must all have recourse to image-worship.

The chief qualities that worship should have are attention and faith. If these are present worship, however crude and uninstructed, will always be fruitful. Worship without attention is useless even if all the minute prescriptions are scrupulously observed. The most important means of success in man's life are attention and sincere faith, which are essential factors of any religion. That is why Indians have accepted attention and faith as the fundamental elements of worship.

It is the qualified state of God that becomes the object of worship. The goal of our life, however, is not the realization of the qualified state. That is only a means of the attainment of the goal. True wisdom is the knowledge of the indefinable, formless, and all-pervading divine principle. That is our goal. The human heart should labour to attain this knowledge. Worship can be practised only as a means to this. Until one is firmly established in supreme devotion to the unmanifested Being he should continue to have faith in some kind of manifested state and worship it.

Today there are many people who despise image-worship. Image-worship, to be sure, is the lowest rung in the ladder of man's spiritual progress; but we must admit that for most people it is a very useful step. They seem to forget the fact that it is God himself who is worshipped through images and idols.

Image worship is regarded as a preliminary stage in the techniques of *bhaktiyoga*. Worship of God through images is the first stage; the next stage is worship through the repetition of the divine names and the singing of the praises of the divine. Meditation is the third stage. The final stage is the awareness of identity of our own self with God. Such is the opinion of spiritual preceptors. Image-worship is never referred to either

in the *śāstras* or in the *purāṇas* as an advanced or excellent form of worship. All forms of worship through material media are elementary. What Swami Vivekananda has said is relevant to the context: "Man's earthly thoughts through low forms of worship become a spiritual communion. In the end the universal, eternal and only spirit will be worshipped in his spirit. All material things are fragmentable, only the spirit is beyond fragmentation. God is pure spirit and therefore eternal. Only an eternal one can worship the Eternal One. That is the most exalted form of spiritual communion."

What is to be attained through image-worship is the realization of God in one's own heart as well as in all other things living on the earth. Image-worship is useful only until God is realized in one's own heart as his ultimate self: "Until one is able to see in his own heart the supreme spirit that dwells in all existent things, he should observe the duties of his state of life and worship God through images."

The truth to be realized next is that it is the same God, now realized in one's own heart, that dwells in every living thing. Spiritual preceptors have made it clear that it is folly to disregard the divine presence in our fellowmen and worship God only in idols: "Those who through idols alone worship God who is present in all beings as the spirit, are foolishly making offerings of mere ashes." Moreover, "That devotee is a crude one who faithfully worships the Lord only in the images but does not worship the Lord's *bhaktas* and others."

Preceptors have made it clear that the end of image-worship is to help a devotee to realize God in himself and in others. This realization is necessary for loving our neighbours as we love ourselves. It is here that the *bhakti* and *jñāna* of the various Hindu philosophical systems become blended together into one. Thus idols and systems of worship are necessary for the progress of the novice in the life in the Spirit. Their value, however, is only in helping him to realize the all-pervading presence of God; nothing beyond it.

From the Hindu point of view other religions also incorporate this idea. Vedantins would take the statement: 'I and

my Father are one' as the experience of a sage who has realized the identity of the individual self with the supreme self. After having thus realized God in his own heart his prayers would be: "Father, as I am one with you, so let them be one with us." Then only would it be possible to realize the unity of the universe in the midst of its manifold, apparent diversities. This leads to communion with the Almighty, the Supreme Spirit. Thus, until the same spirit is realized both in oneself and in one's fellow-men, until God and the universe are united, one cannot do without worshipping the Heavenly Father, a relative God. But this modifying and transforming communion should never become an end in itself; it should lead one to the unqualified and unchangeable communion. Only then will it be helpful to man in his attaining his life's goal, the state of bliss without deaths and rebirths. This is the meaning of the statement: "It is good to be born in a church, but not to die." Have the sages who have achieved the state of lasting bliss any more the need for religious regulations?

We do conceive distinct personalities or modalities in the Supreme Brahman, the unqualified spirit without any form, and make idols and images for worshipping them. But this is solely for the attainment of mental concentration, as a prop for meditation and for making the spiritual journey easier. In this respect image-worship is indeed quite useful.

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BULLETIN - II

Worship Forms for Muslim Inquirers and Converts from Islam

Anyone who has witnessed the Friday prayers at a Muslim mosque or the solitary prayer of an individual Muslim on his prayer rug or along the bank of a river cannot but be impressed by the sense of reverence and devotion which marks such prayers. Muslims regard their form of prayer and worship as one of the great cohesive forces of their religion. Non-Muslims recognize the Muslim form of worship as the strongest unifying factor in Islam, and often point attention to the lack of self-consciousness which Muslims evidence in prayer and worship. Prayer for them is as natural as eating and drinking. The embarrassment which Christians often show in a public expression of their faith is not evident to the same extent in Islam.

It is of course true that much Muslim devotion is characterized by vain repetition, thoughtless form, and the self-righteous performance of ritual. However, thoughtful Muslims themselves regard such practices as abuse of their faith, and there is enough abuse in Christian worship to make us feel sympathetic with their concern.

Worship through bodily movement

Leaving aside the question of abuses, let us ask ourselves whether there is anything objectionable, *per se*, in the Muslim idea that worship is expressed not only by the words of the mouth and thoughts of the heart but also by the participation of the rest of the body. If we remember that Christians often rise to praise God and kneel to confess their sins, we can understand that they too, at least to some extent, subscribe to the concept of worship expressed through bodily movement. Although

we may not regard such movement as essential for valid prayer, we definitely have a place for such expression in our devotional life.

Scriptural precedents

If we examine the Scriptures, we find a number of references which portray men of God accompanying their praise and petitions to God with well-defined bodily movements. In fact, if we put these various references together, we find almost all the bodily postures met with in Muslim worship today.

1. There is the *standing posture* taken by Solomon upon the occasion of the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem. "Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the "assembly of Israel and spread forth his hands towards heaven." (1 Kings 8, 22). Jesus also makes reference to this position when He says in Mk 11, 25: "And whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone,"

2. The Bible also bears witness to the posture of *bowing* either the head or the body before the Lord. When Abraham's servant was successful in locating the relatives of his master in Mesopotamia we read that he "bowed his head and worshipped the Lord." (Gen. 24, 26). When the children of Israel heard of the prospect of their deliverance from bondage in Egypt through Moses and Aaron, it is recorded, "And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord visited the people of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped." (Exodus 4, 31). In Micah 6, 6 the prophet asks the question. "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God most high?"

3. Another posture is *kneeling*, mentioned in the Scriptures either in connection with bowing or with arms extended towards heaven. The Psalmist exhorts us in Ps. 95, 6, "O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Although Solomon started his prayer at the time of the dedication of the temple in a standing posture, it seems that he ended it kneeling. "Now as Solomon finished offering all this prayer and supplication to the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the Lord, where he had knelt with his hands out

stretched to heaven..." (1 Kings 8, 54.) Ezra adopted the same posture when he heard that the men who had returned from the Captivity were beginning to intermarry with the heathen people around them, "And at the evening sacrifice I rose from my fasting with the garments and my mantle rent, and fell upon my knees and spread out my hands to the Lord my God." (Ezra 9, 5). Kneeling is also mentioned as a posture adopted by our Lord and some of His followers in the New Testament. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Luke tells us, "And Jesus withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed." (Luke 22, 41). When Dorcas died, we read that "Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed." (Acts 9, 40). Paul used the same posture when he said his farewell prayer with the elders of Ephesus, "And when he had thus spoken, he knelt down and prayed with them all." (Acts 20, 36).

4. Finally the Scriptures mention a posture which is expressive of man's deepest emotions in the presence of the holy and almighty God: that of *kneeling or bowing with the face to the ground*. When the people of Israel confronted Moses and Aaron with a demand for water in the desert, we read, "Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tent of meeting, and fell on their faces. And the glory of the Lord appeared to them." (Num. 20, 6). When God spoke to Moses on the occasion of giving him the tablets of stone for the second time, we read, "And Moses made haste to bow his head to the earth and worshipped." (Exodus 34, 8). The children of Israel reacted in the same way when the fire of the Lord consumed the sacrifice at the time of the dedication of Solomon's temple. "When all the children of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the Lord upon the temple, they bowed with their faces to the earth on the pavement, and worshipped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, 'For He is good and His steadfast love endures forever.'" (2 Chronicles 7, 3) A similar action is recorded when Ezra read from the Book of the Law after the return of the children of Israel from captivity: "And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen", lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground." (Nehemiah 8, 6). Our Lord Himself climaxed His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane with this posture, as we read in

Matthew 26, 30, "And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, 'My father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt.'"

The Bible, therefore, both Old and New Testaments, gives ample evidence of various physical postures adopted in prayer and worship. Western students of Islam are inclined to believe that Muhammad adapted some of the forms practised by the Jews and Christians in Arabia in his time and incorporated them into the unique form of worship seen in Islam today. Be that as it may, there is nothing objectionable *per se* in the idea of expressing our thought and attitude toward God with our body as well as with our hearts and words.

Hours of Prayer

Furthermore, the practice of observing special hours of prayer, which we find in Islam, is not foreign to the devotional life of believers in the Old and New Testament. When Daniel was beset by plotters against his life, we read: "When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open to Jerusalem: and he got down upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously" (Dan. 6, 10). After Pentecost we are told that "Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour" (Acts. 3, 1). In a subsequent chapter we read that "Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour" (Acts 10, 9). Later Christianity continued the practice of regular prayer vigils, and it is to be doubted if spiritual life has grown any stronger because of their neglect in today's world.

A summary of Scriptural practice

We conclude then that there is nothing objectionable, in itself to the idea of expressing devotion and worship to God in well-defined physical movements at stated times. The Scriptures record the history of these matters but make no set regulations regarding them. We suggest that they may be regarded as *adiaphoron*: something which may or need not be practised. The example of stalwart men of God in both the

Old and New Testaments, however, serves as an encouragement or spur to such ways of prayer.

Why special forms for Muslim inquirers and converts ?

We now address ourselves to the main theme of this paper: Would it be wise and helpful to introduce a special form of worship for Muslim inquirers and converts? Before entering upon the subject it may be good to remind ourselves that various forms already exist among Christians. In some Protestant churches, for example, people stand to sing and sit to pray; in Lutheran churches it is often the custom to sit to sing and stand to pray. Some people fold their hands when they pray; others put their hand to the forehead and cover their eyes. Most people bow heads when they pray; but I have seen Dr Frank Laubach, world literacy expert, lifting his face to heaven when he prayed. Although there is no set law regarding these various practices, their presence suggests that a consideration of other forms is not beyond the realm of possibility.

But why introduce a special form for Muslim inquirers and converts? Is this not a fissiparous tendency? why can't they conform to the practice of the Church? What is the need even for considering the question? Several answers may be given to these queries.

1) It may be helpful to the inquirer or convert to worship in forms to which he is more accustomed. If an inquirer comes into a Christian church today, he may have difficulty in adjusting himself to a completely different form of worship, just as a person from a non-liturgical church may find it hard to worship through a liturgical high mass. The inquirer may wonder if the Christian methods of worship are worship at all; even if he is not as radical as this he may be inclined to regard present Christian forms as an incomplete mode of worship. Therefore a Christian form of worship embodying some of the physical movement found in Muslim worship today may help to bridge the gap.

2) Secondly, some phrases found in Christian liturgies would tend to make an inquirer shy away from participation rather than feel an attraction. Phrases such as "the Lamb of God" here

in India may produce mental pictures of the Deity which are more related to Hindu Pictures of animal gods than the true God. Such a phrase has no meaning to the inquirer unless he has had previous orientation in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. Another phrase which would cause difficulty to a Muslim inquirer, especially during the early stages of his interest, would be the phrase 'the only-begotten Son of God'. Such a phrase would educe visions and concepts of God as involved in marriage relationships. Prayers addressed to Jesus would also represent a theology for which the inquirer is not prepared or ready.

3) Muslims are more accustomed to chanting than to singing. In fact, some Muslims do not know how to sing at all; it is not a part of their culture in all areas. In Malabar they take great delight in listening to the chanting of the Qur'an by one of their leaders. This interest in chanting and in listening to chanting is an interest which invites the creation of special forms of worship for Muslim inquirers and converts.

4) There are some Muslims who are dissatisfied with the aridity of their own faith and are attracted to the deeper spiritual wells of the Christian faith. However, they are not yet at the point where they are ready to break with Islam. A special manner of worship for such inquirers may be of assistance in filling more of their lives with the new wine of the Gospel until their spiritual resolve ferments into an act of decision.

5. A manner of worship incorporating some of the Muslim concepts of worship may prove enriching to the devotional life of the whole Church. Muslim converts have remarked that they have missed the spirit of reverent worship and devotion which they knew in Islam after coming into the Christian fold. Although they recognized the doctrine and life as superior, they felt a lack in the expression of the whole person's response to God. Perhaps this is a facet of Islam which is worth preserving. If we remember that such movements are actually older than Islam, there is no need to fear that we are introducing something of heathenism or unbelief into Christian practice.

Thus the introduction of a special mode of worship for worship for Muslim inquirers involves changes both in the

physical expressions of worship and in the verbal content of the liturgy. Some of the reasoning behind such prospective changes is very similar to that used by De Nobili in his approach to the Hindus of Madurai. It is to be regretted that his work was not completed.

Objections to special forms of worship for People from a Muslim background

Our discussion, however, will not be complete unless we consider the objections which may be raised against introducing special modes of worship for Muslim inquirers and converts from Islam. They may be listed as follows:-

1. Some say that we cannot pour the new wine of the Gospel into the old bottles of Islamic forms. The difference between Christianity and Islam is so great that there must be a complete break: everything Islamic must be left behind. A possible rejoinder to this argument may be found in the Old Testament itself. The forms of worship which the children of Israel used before idols were, at least in part, carried over into their worship of the Lord. In each case they bowed down. In the New Testament we note that the early Christians went to the synagogue and expressed their new devotion in Jewish forms of worship. The object and content of the worship is more important than the mode. A spirit which can retain what is useful or harmless from the past and fill it with new life and meaning is more desirable than that of iconoclasm.
2. Some may look upon such special modes of worship for Muslim inquirers and converts from Islam as a sort of trick or way of luring and deceiving Muslims into the Christian fold. This criticism would be more likely to come from the Muslim community than the Christian community. It would be valid if the special mode is only a gimmick of attraction. If we do not believe in the validity or value of the form, it should not be used. The sincerity and purposes of those conducting the worship are paramount in meeting this criticism.
3. It may be objected that incorporation of Islamic modes of worship is a type of syncretism which will blur the contrast

between Christianity and Islam, and land to an accomodation aimed at making the Christian faith palatable to Muslims in doctrinal matters as well. In reply it may be said that this tension is always present, and it is doubtful if the form of worship will of itself have more or less effect than the convictions of the witnesses themselves. A mode of worship, as is suggested later, can also be a dramatic witness to the truth *vis à vis* Islam.

4. Fourthly, it might be objected that such special modes will prove a disintegrating force in Christian unity and fellowship; they will lead to special groups within the Church, Some worshipping one way at one time and others another way at another time. This objection is only valid if there is no worship in which all take part together. The Church must recognize differences of personality and background in the matter of modes of worship also, and each Christian should be willing and happy to accomodate himself to other modes if he knows that others are enriched thereby. The number of Christians in the world today would be much smaller if everyone was forced to worship according to one liturgy, be it Lutheran, Catholic, or Methodist. Exclusiveness leads to poverty in more than one sense.

5. Finally, it might be argued that some of the Muslim postures in worship are not expressive of the Christian believer's worship-relationship to God. Bowing and touching the head to the ground in abject deference, it is thought, are more indicative of a slave's obeisance to his master than a child's reaction to his father. Muslim worship, it is said, is after all an expression of Muslim theology in its physical movements, and therefore a Christian cannot worship God in those ways.

This is a serious objection and deserves to be considered carefully. First of all, it might be answered that the Muslim has maintained an awe and reverence for the sovereignty and majesty of God which is in sharp contrast to cinema actress Jane Russell's reference to Him as "a livin' Doll." The sovereignty and majesty of God is a theme which runs through all the Scriptures, and neglect of it leads to our spiritual impoverishment. Our Lord did not find his relationship with his Father incompatible with kneeling and falling on His face before Him. Paul also had no hesitation in bending his knees before the Father (Eph. 3, 14).

If the response of the sinless Son of man to His heavenly Father, and of one of His great apostles, was expressed in this way, why should we sinful sons of men shrink from bowing before Him? Is it because the father-image has been degraded to such an extent that awe and respect are beyond our capacity for response? Or has a weak conception of God weakened the whole concept of "father", both in relation to God and to man? Bowing before God is dramatic way of witnessing to His character.

Suggested Principles

In this connection it should be noted that it is nowhere recommended in this paper that Muslim worship, either in its physical movements, or in its content, should be adopted in its entirety. There are aspects, such as the greeting to the two shoulder angels who are believed to keep account of man's good deeds and bad deeds, which should be omitted in Christian worship. On the other hand there are events of Christian history and truths of doctrine which should be recognized in worship, and which call for additions in physical movement and verbal response. Surely the significance of the Trinity and the great facts of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection should be recognized in any Christian worship. The principles to be followed would be threefold:

1. To preserve all that is valuable and useful in the present Muslim worship, both in form and content.
2. To delete that which is anti-Christian or out of harmony with Scriptural conceptions.
3. To add new bodily and verbal expressions for vital Christian truths and responses. Since it is rather difficult to discuss or think about such a subject theoretically, let us take an example of each principle. A complete paper on this subject would include a whole suggested liturgy, but in this introductory study we content ourselves with examples or samples.

First there is the principle of preserving that which is valuable and useful in present Muslim form and content. When Muslims are called to the early morning prayer, they are invited by the words, "Come to prayer, prayer is better than sleep."

Such an invitation is an expression of truth exemplified in our Lord's own life and can be profitably retained in Christian worship, also. Another phrase which is used during Muslim prayer is the "Bismillah," – "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." This phrase, along with "God is great," testifies to truths and the Christian can repeat them with full conviction.

Secondly, there is the principle of deleting that which is anti-Christian or out of harmony with Scriptural conceptions. In one part of the prayer the Muslims say, "I witness; there is no god but God. I witness: Muhammed is the Messenger of God." Christians can subscribe to the first witness but have reservations about the second. A possible substitute in this case might be, "There is no god but God, and He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ the Saviour of the World."

Thirdly, there is the principle of adding new bodily and verbal expressions of vital Christian truths and responses. Churchill had his "V for Victory" sign. Can we not make up some symbol incorporating the glorious fact of the Resurrection? One suggestion would be to stand with heads lifted up and arms raised to heaven in a crossed position symbolizing the Cross and Christ's victory accompanied by the words, "He is risen: yes, He is risen indeed." Surely some of our brethren gifted in liturgies could study the forms and words of Muslim worship and propose a Christian form which would preserve some of the flavour of the old and introduce insights and truths from the new.

A final observation has to do with the place of worship. Muslim mosques are usually very simple and plain inside. Often it is a bare room with no furniture and only a niche in the front wall indicating the direction of Mecca, the direction of worship. Since Muslims have a negative attitude toward pictures and statues, the place of worship should be as simple as possible. It is even doubtful if a cross or crucifix should be placed in front because some Muslims have the idea that Christians worship the Cross. Such symbols could be introduced after there is fuller understanding, not at the beginning. Muslims also place a great deal of emphasis on the cleanliness of the place of worship. Christians should not lag behind in this aspect.

Conclusion

In this paper nothing has been said about the language to be used in worship. This is only an indication that many things and considerations are involved, and that the task is far from complete. No real conclusions can be reached unless something along this line is attempted. It is the opinion of the author that the aim "to be all things to all men" provides a sufficient basis for introducing special worship forms for Muslim inquirers and converts from Islam.

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